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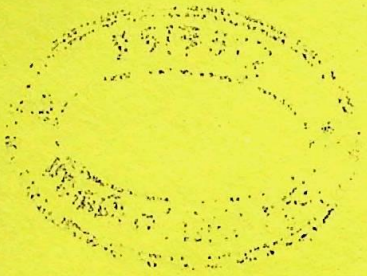
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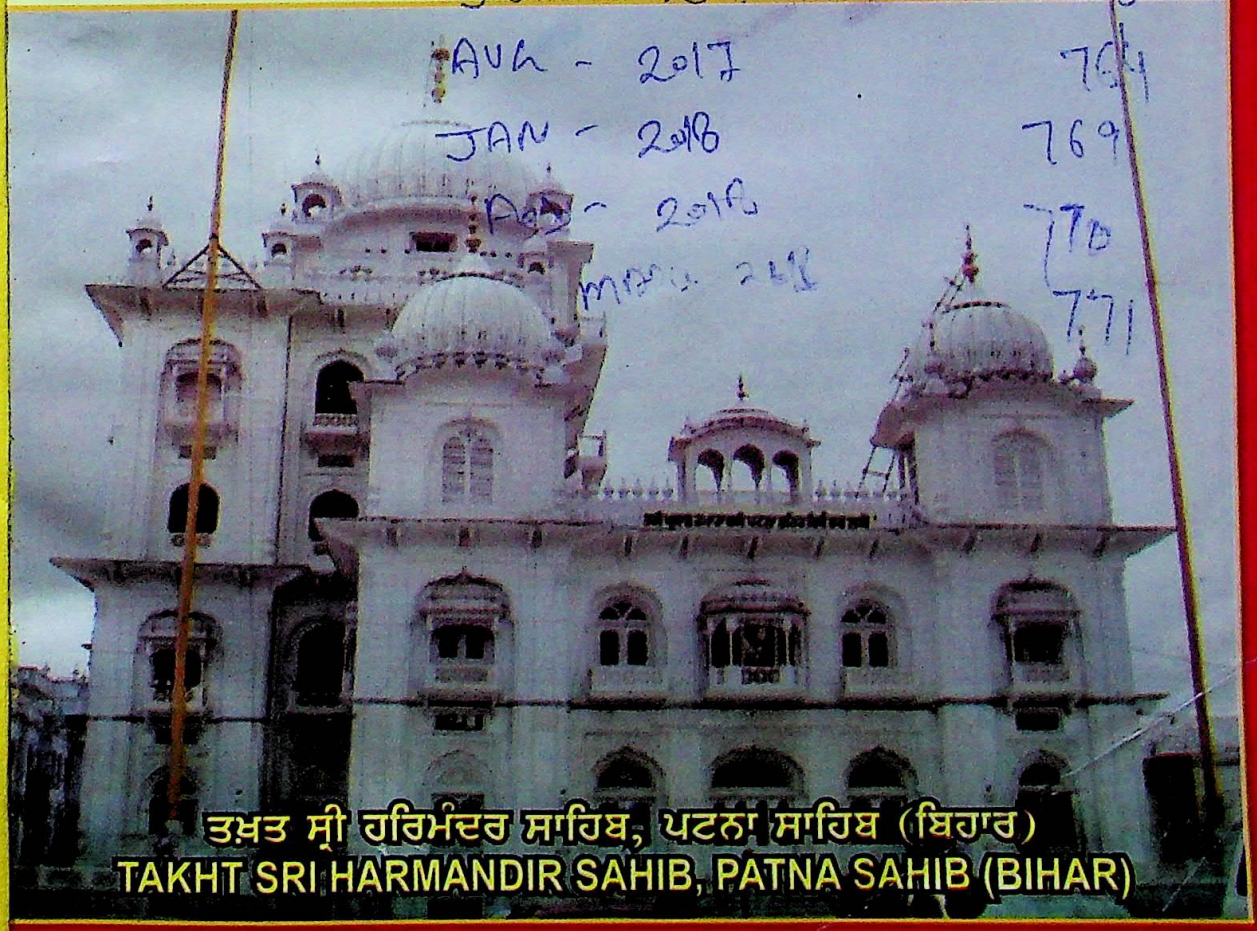
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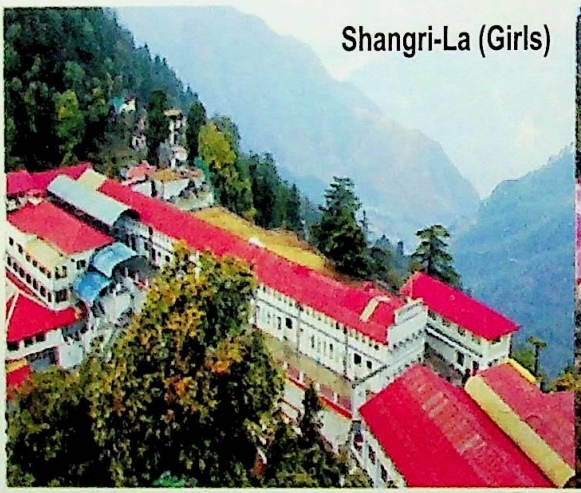
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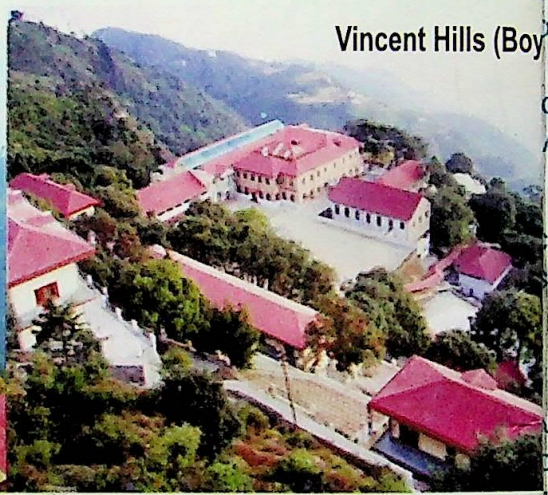
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CONTENTS

ITATION	Devotion is the Pathway to Divine Grace	*Shabad Gurbani*	5
ST EDITORIAL	The Celestial Blend of Gurbani text with Classical Ragas: Sri Guru Granth Sahib	Dr. Prithipal Singh	6
OLOGY	Guru Gobind Singh - The Apostle of the Downtrodden	Dr. Balbir Singh Bhasin	10
	Baba Sheikh Farid, Ganj-E-Shakar (1173-1265)	Khushhal Singh (Canada)	14
OSOPHY	Naam: God's Revealed Word	Dr. Jasjit Singh Walia	17
AL TRADITION	Global Human Rights Movement: Guru Tegh Bahadur's Key Contribution	Prof. Pritam Singh	21
	The "Manji" System: An Innovative Institution (Part-I)	Makhan Singh	25
CHOLOGY	Exploring the realm of Mind	Tejinder Singh Madan	29
SPECTIVES	Bawa Kartar Singh: Yesteryears Sikh Scientist - who missed the Nobel Prize by a whisker	Prof. Hardev Singh Virk Prof. Rajinder Singh	32
	Life's Goal: The Choice is Yours - Always!	K S Ahluwalia	36
POINT	Finding a voice for global Sikhism	Inderjit Singh Jaijee	41
AMICS	The 'Chemistry' of a Sikh	Dr. Jasbir Singh Chawla	45
ONICLE	The Non-Violent Struggle to 'Liberate' Guru-Ka-Bagh	Prin. Sawan Singh (USA)	49
EARCH	"The Lion's Firanghis"- Europeans in the Court of Sikh Raj	Contributed	55
PORA	Valarie Kaur Tours USA Fighting Hate With Love	Contributed	58
RVIEW	An Interview of Dr. Mimpal Singh	Farhan Wilayat Butt	60
SICS	Raja Ratan Rai (from 'Sri Guru Kalgidhar Chamatkar) [Chapter - IV]	Bhai Sahib Vir Singh (Tr. By Bimal Kaur)	63
H SECTION	The Budding Artist We should Know!	Contributed	65
	Pakistan's first Sikh cricketer Mahinder Pal Singh	Contributed	68
S CORNER	Mysterious Are the Ways of God	Principal S. S. Prince	69
ERS' FORUM	Letters to Editor		70
	Synopsis of Notable Events		71
S	1) Heritage of Sant Sipahis - Ambassadors of Human Rights 2) The Resolute Sikhs By S. Rajinder Singh Jolly	Reviewed by Dr. Harpreet Kaur	75

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Devotion is the Pathway to Divine Grace

ਸਿਰੀਰਾਗੁ ਮਹਲਾ ੩ ॥

ਗੋਵਿਦੁ ਗੁਣੀ ਨਿਧਾਨੁ ਹੈ ਅੰਤੁ ਨ ਪਾਇਆ ਜਾਇ ॥

ਕਥਨੀ ਬਦਨੀ ਨ ਪਾਈਐ ਹਉਮੈ ਵਿਚਹੁ ਜਾਇ ॥

ਸਤਗੁਰਿ ਮਿਲਿਐ ਸਦ ਭੈ ਰਚੈ ਆਪਿ ਵਸੈ ਮਨਿ ਆਇ ॥੧॥

ਭਾਈ ਰੇ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਬੂਝੈ ਕੋਇ ॥

ਬਿਨੁ ਬੂਝੇ ਕਰਮ ਕਮਾਵਣੇ ਜਨਮੁ ਪਦਾਰਥੁ ਖੋਇ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

[SGGS: 33]

Translation*

The Lord of the Universe is the Treasure of Excellence;
His limits cannot be defined.

He is not obtained by mouthing mere words,
but by rooting out ego from within.

Meeting the True Guru, one is permeated forever with the
Fear of God, who Himself comes to dwell within the mind. II 1 II

O Siblings of Destiny, one who becomes Gurmukh and
understands this is very rare.

To act without understanding is to lose the treasure of this
human life. II 1 II Pause II

** Translation fromm Gurbani Research*

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The Celestial Blend of Gurbani text with Classical Ragas: In Sri Guru Granth Sahib

*Dr. Prithipal Singh**

All Sikhs know that the **Japji Sahib**, is the opening (Scriptural Text) baani in Sri Guru Granth Sahib. It is recited daily as "**Nit Nem**". It teaches us the basic lesson of the glory of God. This is defined in Pauri 5, as follows:

ਗਾਵੀਐ ਸੁਣੀਐ ਮਨਿ ਰਖੀਐ ਭਾਉ ॥ ਦੁਖੁ ਪਰਹਰਿ ਸੁਖੁ ਘਰਿ ਲੈ ਜਾਇ ॥ [SGGS: 2]

Sing, and listen, and let your mind be filled with love.

Your pain shall disappear, and peace shall come to your home.

This concept of singing Gurbani is further elaborated by Guru Amar Das Ji in the Anand Sahib Puari 22 [SGGS: 920]:

ਆਵਹੁ ਸਿਖ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਕੇ ਪਿਆਰਿਹੋ ਗਾਵਹੁ ਸਚੀ ਬਾਣੀ ॥ ਬਾਣੀ ਤ ਗਾਵਹੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਕੇਰੀ ਬਾਣੀਆ ਸਿਰਿ ਬਾਣੀ ॥

Come, O Beloved Sikhs of the True Guru, and sing the True Word of His Baani

Sing the Guru's Baani, the Supreme Scripture.

Further, Guru Amar Das Ji reminds us of the importance of understanding the true essence of Gurbani in the following Salok:

ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਨੋ ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਵੇਖਦਾ ਜੇਤਾ ਜਗਤੁ ਸੰਸਾਰੁ ॥ ਡਿਠੈ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਨ ਹੋਵਈ ਜਿਚਰੁ ਸਬਦਿ ਨ ਕਰੇ ਵੀਚਾਰੁ ॥ [SGGS: 594]

All the living beings of the world behold the True Guru

But one is not liberated by merely seeing Him, unless one contemplates the word of His Shabad.

Thus, there is emphasis on (1) singing, (2) listening and (3) contemplating on the Gurbani. This leads to divinity and it is very important for attaining oneness with The Almighty. Some aspects of understanding the significance of reading the Guru Granth Sahib are analysed in the following paragraphs.

The Inspirational Power of Poetry Rhythm / Music:

Guru Nanak DevJi recognised the power of music as a tool for transcendence. He would capture the divine intimations (**Dhur ki baani**) He received it in poetry and adorned it in music. He would ask Bhai Mardana Ji to play the rebeck (Rabab) whenever he received the divine intimation (*Mardanaya, rabab ched, baani aarahyee hai*). Guru Ji gave us a powerful spiritual practice (in the form of kirtan) to attain a heightened spiritual awareness (nadar = Grace) through attentive listening. All the Guru Sahiban used this eclectic mix of musical measures freely to suit the need of

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the composition. This resulted in an excellent blend of Gurbani and music.

At the same time, care was taken to ensure that music did not overwhelm the spiritual content of the Baani. Thus, the Holy Guru Sahiban brought together Raagas of classical tradition and serialized their own poetic verses. This helped in building bridges between different communities and classical tradition. It was a ground breaking approach in unifying the pluralistic and democratic culture of the orient. This resulted in mixing classical elements with the folk and regional music. It is interesting to note that seventeen regional varieties of Raagas are found at one place in the Granth Sahib. **The recording of musical measures with divine hymns creates a musicological and theological coherence in the Guru Granth Sahib. It presents an excellent combination of lyrical and rational elements.**

This aspect of **"the power of music"** became an important element for compiling the Granth Sahib (Aad Granth) by Guru Arjan Dev Ji. Guru Sahib arranged the baani in as many as 30 raagas as well as the regional varieties of some raagas depending on the composition of different enlightened souls whose contributions were accepted for inclusion in the Granth Sahib. Thus this scripture is unique in the fact that each hymn (shabad) is assigned to a definite raag. At the same time, it is interesting to know that raagas such as Manjh, Asa, Wadhans, Maru, and Tukhari are unique to the Sikh tradition. Muslim and Sufi compositions are usually in **Asa, Suhi**, and **Tilang**, while the yogis favoured raag Ramkali. Guru Arjan Dev Ji, as "an editor par excellence" ensured that the original composition and the raag in which it was composed, was not altered. This has helped in maintaining the purity of the original composition.

About 100 years after the "Pehla Prakash" of the Aad Granth, Guru Gobind Singh Ji incorporated the baani of Guru Tegh BahadurJi to prepare "a definitive version" of the Holy Scripture. This definitive version was installed as the "Eternal Guru" in 1708 and became recognised as the "Guru Granth Sahib". In this Holy Scripture, a total of 31 raagas are recorded. Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji composed baani in a new **"raag Jaijaiwanti"**. Interestingly, Guru Arjan DevJi, the "editor" of the "Aad Granth" has contributed the maximum baani in 30 out of the 31 raagas in the Guru Granth Sahib.

A brief mention of some of the **ragas** would help us in understanding the significance of the compositions in the Guru Granth Sahib.

1. **Sree Raag** is recorded as the first raag in the Guru Granth Sahib. This occupies a prominent place in the Scripture. It brings equipoise and sweetness Guru Amar Das Ji considered it to be a very important musical form, because it helps to connect the soul to the truth. This is reflected in the following composition :

ਰਾਗਾ ਵਿਚਿ ਸ੍ਰੀਰਾਗੁ ਹੈ ਜੇ ਸਚਿ ਧਰੇ ਪਿਆਰੁ ॥

[SGGS: 83]

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Sree Raag is the best amongst the raagas, only if one enshrines love for truth through it Bhai Gurdas Ji refers to this raag as paaras or the "touchstone", (a hard black stone used for testing the purity of gold), thus recognising its importance in Gurbani.

2. **Raag Sorath** represents a light and cheerful mood. It motivates us to imbibe the nectar of divinity, thus helping us to realise "true joy and satisfaction". This is reflected in the following composition of Guru Arjan Dev Ji :

ਸੋਰਠਿ ਸੋ ਰਸੁ ਪੀਜੀਐ ਕਬਹੂ ਨ ਫੀਕਾ ਹੋਇ ॥
[SGGS: 1425]

Through raag Sorath, imbibe the sublime essence, which never loses its taste.

3. **Raag Bilaaval** is associated with happiness and beautification of the soul. Accordign to Guru Amar Das Ji, the singing of this raag becomes meaningful when Naam is connected to it. The significance of this concept is brought out in the following composition :

ਬਿਲਾਵਲੁ ਤਬ ਹੀ ਕੀਜੀਐ ਜਬ ਮੁਖਿ ਹੋਵੈ ਨਾਮੁ ॥
[SGGS: 849]

One should sing Raag Bilaaval only when the Name of The Divine is on one's lips.

4. **Raag Ramkali** has been compared to an ornament which helps us to adorn the divine knowledge. When we access divine knowledge through the wisdom of the Guru, all darkness (spiritual ignorance) is dispelled. Guru Amar Das Ji explains this in the following composition :

ਰਾਮਕਲੀ ਰਾਮੁ ਮਨਿ ਵਸਿਆ ਤਾ ਬਨਿਆ ਸੀਗਾਰੁ ॥
[SGGS: 950]

If, by singing Raamkali, the Divine comes to dwell in the mind, only then are the robes worn to find Him beautiful, pleasing.

The most commonly recited compositon in this Raag is the "Anand Sahib" composed by Guru Amar Das Ji. Guru Nanak DevJi's interaction with the Siddhs and recorded as "Siddh Gost" is also in Raag Raamkali.

5. **Raag Malhar** has a calming effect on the mind and leads to true peace within. Guru Amar Das Ji's compositions bring out the essence of this concept.

ਮਲਾਰੁ ਸੀਤਲ ਰਾਗੁ ਹੈ ਹਰਿ ਧਿਆਇਐ ਸਾਂਤਿ ਹੋਇ ॥
[SGGS: 1283]

Malaar is a calming and soothing Rag; meditating on the Lord brings peace and tranquillity.

ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਮਲਾਰ ਰਾਗੁ ਜੋ ਕਰਹਿ ਤਿਨ ਮਨੁ ਤਨੁ ਸੀਤਲੁ ਹੋਇ ॥
[SGGS: 1285]

Those Gurmukhs who sing in Raag Malar, their minds and bodies become cool and calm.

Conclusion:

Thus Sri Guru Granth Sahib, has the compositions in a total of 31 raagas. This is one raag more than the compilation made

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by Guru Arjan Dev Ji. It is due to the incorporation of the baani of Guru Tegh BahadurJi by Guru Gobind Singh Ji. The ninth "Nanak" contributed baani in a new raag – **raag Jaijawanti** – in addition to 14 other raagas recorded in the Guru Granth Sahib. This version of the Guru Granth Sahib (known as the Damdami Bir) was conferred the Gur Gaadi by Guru Gobind Singh Ji in 1708.

The word **raag** refers to the "colour" or tone and, more specifically, the emotion or mood produced by a combination or sequence of pitches. A raag is composed of a series of melodic motifs, based upon a definite scale or mode of the seven "sounds" that provide a basic structure around kwhich the musician performs. Some raags may be associated with times of the day and year. The 31 raagas in the "Sri Guru Granth Sahib", the Sikh scripture, are divided into 14 raagas and 17 raginis (minor or less definite raagas).

Within the raga division, the shabads are arranged in order of the Guru Sahiban and Sikh Bhagats with whom they are associated. In addition, there are 22 compositions of Vars (traditional ballads). Nine of these have specific tunes (for example, the daily morning kirtan – **Asa-di-Var**), and the rest can be sung to any tune. ☐

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Guru Gobind Singh Ji - The Apostle of the Downtrodden

*Dr. Balbir Singh Bhasin**

The expression 'apostle' originally comes from the Greek language which derived from a verb 'apostolo'. In secular usage it was used for 'a person sent on a specific assignment or mission'. This qualification of an apostle applies to Sri Guru Gobind Singh Jee without any doubt, because according to his own testimony in Bachitra Nataka (Autobiography of Sri Guru Gobind Singh jee), the divine Ultimate Reality (Akal Purakh), has sent or given a call to Guruji to spread dharma (righteousness) in the world. In a chaupai, this is stated as follows:

ਮੈਂ ਅਪਨਾ ਸੁਤ ਤੋਹਿ ਨਿਵਾਜਾ ॥ ਪੰਥ ਪ੍ਰਚੁਰ ਕਰਬੇ ਕਹੁ ਸਾਜਾ ॥
ਜਾਹਿ ਤਹਾਂ ਤੈ ਧਰਮ ਚਲਾਇ ॥ ਕਬੁੱਧਿ ਕਰਨ ਤੇ ਲੋਕ ਹਟਾਇ ॥

I have established you as my son and have created you to spread dharma.

Go from this place to that one,

Move the cycle of dharma and stop people from committing evil deeds.

After telling about his 'divine call' Guruji also stated the objective of his coming into this world. We have actually Guruji's mission statement in Bachitar Natak. The English translation of his mission statement read as:

The Objective of my coming into this world is to protect dharma and the Lord God sent me for this purpose. Spread religion everywhere and throw down the knaves.

For this very purpose I have taken birth O Saints, this much you should understand well. I am born to spread religion, emancipate the saints and to wipe out the whole lot of wicked ones.

It inspires, Sri Guru Gobindjee to work relentlessly for his mission was in fact his vision of the 'Universal Humanhood'. This vision of the unity of all human beings or humanity was as such common to all the Ten Gurus. For example, in Japji Sahib, Guru Nanak Dev Ji had declared that before God all are equal:

Sayeth Nanak: All before him are alike-
None high or low

The third Guruji Amardasji made it clear that all human beings are created from the same source. He said:

All talk of the four castes:

Know that all creation from the divine.

Essence has arisen.

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The whole universal from the same day has appeared.

As all the Gurus were the extension of the same Nanak, so was/is their vision of 'Universal Humanhood'. In Akal Ustat, we find the Tenth Guru ji's vision of 'Universal Humanhood' in still more comprehensive and clear terms, which he stated as:

Some people call themselves mundia, some sannyasi (ascetics), some yogi and some yati (celebrates). Some call themselves Hindu, some are Turks, others Haffzi or Imamsafi. But all mankind should be recognized as one. The same one (Lord) is Creator, Compassionate Provider of bread, Munificient. He has no co-eternal, no dualism: we must never accept any duality. To serve the only one is our duty. He alone is the Guru of all. All mankind be taken as one manifestation of His Light.

Guruji's vision of the 'Universal Humanhood' is rooted in his vision of Akal Purakh about whom he said in the opening the Chhapai Chand of Japji:

You have no specific physical appearance, nor do you have any varna, caste or sub-caste. Nobody can describe your features, complexion, your outlines, or your garb.

(Courtsey: Keynote address delivered at Sri Guru Gobind Singh College of Commerce, Delhi University by Prof. Dr. (Habil) James Massey)

Guru Gobind Singh, the Tenth and the last Guru of Sikhs, has shining place in the galaxy of the great heroes of humanity. He maintains a very high and respectable position in the history of India, for he changed the course of events and set up a new religious philosophy, much needed to guide the destinies of the people. His multifaceted personality sets an ideal of perfection in each one of its aspects. His versatile genius always achieved the best in every sphere.

His life was full of struggle and strife, yet noble and inspiring. To be known a great military genius, is not known a history apart from him. But this is not all. He was much more besides an outstanding social reformer, a profound scholar, a prodigious linguist, a great organizer and above all a nation builder. He believed and advocated the golden principle of "MANAS KI JAT SABE EKE PAHICHAANBO".

As a shepherd of souls, he fed and moulded his flock-the sheep that looked up to him. In the battlefield, as a general he displayed such unsurpassed military and strategic ability that he not only surprised his adversaries but also won their applause. As an organizer, he awakened amongst his followers a spirit of self-sacrifice. With the institution of "Amrit" he not only threaded the lives of his followers, but could evolve a classless coherent brotherhood of saint-soldiers. To defend the truth he founded the order of the Khalsa. As such he brought to a beautiful culmination of the mission that

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Guru Nanak embarked upon, and that his successors furthered in their own way but they never forgot that "*Sab mein jot, jot hai soea*"- Guru Nanak's Jiyoti.

In his boyhood, even he developed self-reliance, responsibility and leadership. At the age of 9, he could think of sacrifice and advised his father to lay down his life, as he was the Holiest person then, for the helpless and the wronged, realizing fully well the consequences for himself and his father's followers. Words fail to describe his courage and greatness. He was confident that without his father's care and guidance and affection, he could carry on. For him, though a lad, the call of a Noble cause was dearer than anything else. It is not something wonderful?

Not only this much, when his father, Guru Teg Bahadur, from inside the prison, sent him a verse to test his mind viz.

ਬਲੁ ਛੁਟਕਿਓ ਬੰਧਨ ਪਰੇ ਕਛੁ ਨ ਹੋਤ ਉਪਾਇ ॥
ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਅਬ ਓਟ ਹਰਿ ਗਜ ਜਿਉ ਹੋਹੁ ਸਹਾਇ ॥੫੩॥
ਬਲੁ ਹੋਆ ਬੰਧਨ ਛੁਟੇ ਸਭੁ ਕਿਛੁ ਹੋਤ ਉਪਾਇ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਭੁ ਕਿਛੁ ਤੁਮਰੈ ਹਾਥ ਮੈ ਤੁਮ ਹੀ ਹੋਤ ਸਹਾਇ ॥੫੪॥
[SGGS: 1429]

Further when Bhai Jiwan Singh brought to him the head of his father, after he had been beheaded, and narrated to him what difficulties he had to encounter and how he had to hide himself for the job, the boy Gobind remarked; "Well I shall now see that my followers are not able to hide themselves and they will do their work openly and undauntedly they will do or die."

This speaks of honestly, boldness and sincerity of purpose that were motivating the Guru from the very beginning. In this respect, the Guru stands unique.

Guru Gobind Singh's life mission was to lift up the humanity. He felt that the system of caste and creed untouchability, superstition, gods and goddesses, cowardice, selfishness and voice and physical inability and indignity of women folk had destroyed the society. This coupled with the tyranny, injustice and persecution of Hindus and their myriad other hardships, had made the Hindu life extremely miserable. The Guru then organized his followers into Khalsa, gave them the sword, served them the Amrit, Sweet water of life, made them real Brethren and ordered them to stand four square against social injustices and rules of tyranny, with the motto of "do or die".

This steeled their hearts and made them fight singly and severally, against the legion numbers of the enemy. They fought against the tyrannical rules, Hindus as well as Muslims. There were so many blood battles and much bloodshed. His Khalsa established its name for bravery, chivalry and hardiness. The result was the humiliation of the Hill Rajas of northern India uprooting of the Moghul might and fearlessness of the common man, and chastening of his superstitious and iniquitous mentality.

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Though militarism was in Gobind Singh, he hesitated to take up the sword to kill. He was essentiality a peace and God loving man. He brandished the sword as the last resort. In his own words he says in Zafarnama, an apostle of victory, which he sent to Aurangzeb.

"Compelled I jumped into the battlefield. And jumped equipped with bows and arrows. When a matter passes all remedy to grasp the sword is justified.

How can I trust your swearing by the Quran, otherwise you will say yourself that I have little interest in this path.

Little I know that these men of yours play like foxes. Otherwise nothing else could bring me to this path."

This saint-soldier was a man of letters and he was surrounded by men of letters and literature. His poetry and verses have an extraordinary force. The style even is marital. Read his "Vani" and you will find him a great scholar. He alongwith his men, produced a lot of literature. This literature portrays him as a man of God. His dealings with other show him a man of gigantic intelligence and far-sight and sympathy. His compliments to his own man, Bhai Ghannaiya, who served water on the battlefield even to the enemy, are very touching. Guru Gobind Singh gave an ointment (Malham) to Bhai Ghannaiya to apply on the wounds of Soldiers- irrespective of their caste, religion and faith.

Guru Gobind Singh was the tenth and the last Guru of the Sikhs and sat on *Guru di Gaddi* at the age of nine and for the next 33 years consolidated the military power of the Sikhs, leading them against the Islamic powers, Hill Kings (Tyrant Hindus) with considerable success. In fact, most of the visible aspects of the Sikh community today owe their origin to Guru Gobind Singh. He gave them the name of "Khalsa" after Baptizing them with Amrit (Nector) meaning the pure. The male members of the community were given the title of Singh (Lion) and the females that of "Kaur" (princess). He also introduced the five symbols for the Sikhs known commonly as the five K's. These are:-

1. Kesh (uncut hair)
2. Kangha (Comb)
3. Kirpan (Sword)
4. Kachhehra (Long underwear)
5. Karha (Iron Bangle)

He would pray to God Almighty (Wahe Guru):

O' Almighty Father give me the blessing.
That I may not be deterred from good acts.
I should not fear when I fight, with confidence I get my victory.

□

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Baba Sheikh Farid, Ganj-e-Shakar (1173-1265) Some Little-known Biographical Facts

KHUSHHAL SINGH (CANADA)*

Baba Shiekh Farid was a descendent of Farrukh Shah, the ruler of Kabul. His great grandfather was killed during the invasion and plunder of the capital by the Mongol Changez Khan'e son Halaku, whereupon Sheikh Farid Sahib's grandfather, along with some ancestors, talented artisans and scholars, migrated to Punjab. Thus he had "blue blood" from his father's side. As he was married to the daughter of Nasirudin Balban, the then Emperor of Delhi, he had a second reason to be 'royal'.

Sheikh Farid was born as the second son of Jamal-ud-Din and Marriam in 1173 in Kothiwal near Multan. He lived on to the age of 92 years, and is the earliest of the fifteen saints whose holy writings are incorporated in Sri Guru Granth Sahib (SGGS); his four hymns and 121 sloks (couplets) are included in SGGS. These little known biographical facts are given here to show the royalty of the great saint. Guru Nanak Dev Ji made two visis to Pak Pattan, now in Pakistan, and collected the holy literature from his sixth descendent in line-Sheikh Ibrahim.

There were two pious and noble women in Farid Sahib's life. One was his mother Marriam, and the other was his wife. His mother Mariam descended in line from Ali, the son-in-law of Prophet Mohammed. She worked to form in her boy a spiritual bent of mind, and put him on the path of prayer. She would put some candy under the prayer-carpet, and tell him that God had put it there as reward for the prayer. Once when she missed doing so, he was intensely blessed during the prayer. Though he was induced to pray with reward of sweet candy, he ultimately realized that though candy, sugar, suger-cane, honey and buffalo's milk were sweet, sweetest of all things was the Name of Allah.

An incident is related of a robber entering Farid Sahib's mother's house at night, and during the act of stealing lost his vision; he cried and vowed that if his sight was restored, he would never steal again. Mirriam prayed for him, and he could see again. It was pious lady's prayer that restored his sight. His whole family became her followers. Marriam's son had to be a saint too. Because of his modest nature and sweet language, he was called "Ganj-e-Shakkar". He was sweat of tongue, simple of habits and noble by nature. He had been to Mecca at the tender age of 13!

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The other woman in his life was Hazabra, his wife. He had accepted the dowry including precious jewellery, but gifted all among the poor, and lived the same saintly life, in which she never interfered, and fully supported him.

While the Muslim invaders had been plundering and killing people in north India as well as destroying temples and by force converting Hindus to Islam, Sheikh Farid was among the sufi thinkers with missionary zeal who led men to God, and to lead a virtuous life. Khawaja Bakhtiyar Kaki, a disciple of Khawaja Moin-ud-Din Chishti of Ajmer moulded him more, and made Farid Sahib his heir and successor as head of the Chisty order.

Thereafter Baba Farid settled down in Pak Pattan, now in Pakistan. It was a tradition to meet Farid Sahib after washing hands and feet in water, hence the place came to be known as Pak Pattan. He is revered as head of the brigade of moral and spiritual thought both by Muslims and non-Muslims of India and Pakistan. His mellifluous poetry, influenced by his Persian background exhorts all to be God-fearing, humble, humane, content and of good behaviour even to the wrong-doer.

Farid Sahib spent some months at a place later known after him as Faridkot, where a large number of disciples collected round him. His birthday is celebrated there every year, when his hymns are also recited.

Despite his command over Arabic, Persian, Urdu and Hindi, Sheikh Farid wrote in Punjabi, and is the founder of the Punjabi literary diction, and has left inspiring soulful poetry.

When he died in 1265, he was buried outside the town of Pak Pattan at a place called Martyr's Grave.

Some hymns of his would show the depth of his devotion to the Lord. His '**Birha**' in "**Kali koel tu kit gun kali**" (Suhi, ang 794), feeling of unpreparedness to meet the Lord on death in the shabad 'ਬੇੜਾ ਬੰਧਿ ਨ ਸਕਿਓ' (Suhi, ang 794), his devotion and worship of Allah in the hymn '*Diillo mohabbat jin seyee saachhaya*, (Asa, ang 488)' and his reflections on transitory nature of man's life in 'Bole SHEIKH FARID' (Asa, ang 488) touch our heartl. The sloks of Farid Sahib have 18 comments of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, Guru Amar Das Ji and Guru Arjan Dev Ji.

The sloks of Farid Sahib cover many aspects of human behaviour and matters of life. Some examples will illustrate.

1. ਫਰੀਦਾ ਜੋ ਤੈ ਮਾਰਨਿ ਮੁਕੀਆਂ ਤਿਨ੍ਹਾ ਨ ਮਾਰੇ ਘੁੰਮਿ ॥ ਆਪਨੜੈ ਘਰਿ ਜਾਈਐ ਪੈਰ ਤਿਨ੍ਹਾ ਦੇ ਚੁੰਮਿ ॥੭॥

[SGGS: 1378]

The saint teaches us not to repeat violence, but to be peaceful.

2. ਦੇਖੁ ਫਰੀਦਾ ਜੁ ਥੀਆ ਦਾੜੀ ਹੋਈ ਭੂਰ ॥ ਅਗਹੁ ਨੇੜਾ ਆਇਆ ਪਿਛਾ ਰਹਿਆ ਦੂਰਿ ॥੯॥ [SGGS: 1378]

The saint's beard by man's mortal nature is gone grey after passage of youth due to his declining years.

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3. ਫਰੀਦਾ ਗਲੀਏ ਚਿਕੜੁ ਦੂਰਿ ਘਰੁ ਨਾਲਿ ਪਿਆਰੇ ਨੇਹੁ ॥ ਚਲਾ ਤ ਭਿਜੈ ਕੰਬਲੀ ਰਹਾਂ ਤ ਤੁਟੈ ਨੇਹੁ ॥੨੪॥ [SGGS: 1379]

The way to my Beloved's house is far away, going where will drench my blanket.

4. ਭਿਜਉ ਸਿਜਉ ਕੰਬਲੀ ਅਲਹ ਵਰਸਉ ਮੇਹੁ ॥ ਜਾਇ ਮਿਲਾ ਤਿਨਾ ਸਜਣਾ ਤੁਟਉ ਨਾਹੀ ਨੇਹੁ ॥੨੫॥ [SGGS: 1379]

Wetting of the blanket is immaterial, if it gets one me the rain of divine love

5. ਫਰੀਦਾ ਦਰੀਆਵੈ ਕੰਨੈ ਬਗੁਲਾ ਬੈਠਾ ਕੇਲ ਕਰੇ ॥ ਕੇਲ ਕਰੇਦੇ ਹੰਝ ਨੋ ਅਚਿੰਤੇ ਬਾਜ ਪਏ ॥ ਬਾਜ ਪਏ ਤਿਸੁ ਰਬ ਦੇ ਕੇਲਾਂ ਵਿਸਰੀਆਂ ॥ ਜੋ ਮਨਿ ਚਿਤਿ ਨ ਚੇਤੇ ਸਨਿ ਸੋ ਗਾਲੀ ਰਬ ਕੀਆਂ ॥੯੯॥ [SGGS: 1383]

While the crane on the river-bank is busy enjoying its sport, the hawk pounces upon it. Similarly does man keeps himself busy in his material pursuit till God's Death couriers come to take away his soul. ❑

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Naam: God's Revealed Word

*Dr. Jasjit Singh Walia**

The Nature of Naam :

Guru Amar Das, the third Satguru, in the hymns below, advises us that Naam is a priceless divine jewel, whose nature, worth as well as great Moral and spiritual importance is beyond human description.

ਨਾਵੈ ਕੀ ਕੀਮਤਿ ਮਿਤਿ ਕਹੀ ਨ ਜਾਇ ॥
[SGGS: 666, ਧਨਾਸਰੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੩॥]

The worth and the state of Naam cannot be described.

ਵਾਹੁ ਵਾਹੁ ਪੂਰੇ ਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ
ਪੂਰੇ ਗੁਰ ਤੇ ਉਪਜੀ ਸਾਚਿ ਸਮਾਣੀ ॥
[SGGS: 754, ਮਹਲਾ ਸੂਹੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੩॥]

Gloriously delightful and enchanting are the hymns of the perfect Guru. They originate from the perfect Guru, and get merged in True One.

Clearly then, Naam in Sikh religion is the Creative and Controlling Word of Akal Purakh (God, The Timeless One), as revealed in Gurbani (Guru's hymns). Therefore the word Naam possesses a supremely revered and majestic status. Indeed, Naam is a uniquely divine and a divinely unique all-inclusive God's own Order pervading the entire cosmos, including our inner self, as is beautifully illustrated by the hymn below.

ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮੁ ਮਿਲੈ ਵਡਿਆਈ ਏਦੂ ਊਪਰਿ ਕਰਮੁ ਨਹੀ ॥
[SGGS: 903, ਰਾਮਕਲੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੧]

Nanak, with Naam one gets honor (here and beyond). No other (religious or ceremonial) deed is superior to it.

Thus Naam has profoundly meaningful significance because it has the ability and power to influence our thinking, our opinion, our attitude, our behavior, our doings and our daily life. It therefore has the intrinsic ability to promote our physical, mental and spiritual health. No wonder, we cannot fully describe Naam in all its ramifications. This theme is well described by the following hymn:

ਰਾਮ ਨਾਮੁ ਰਤਨ ਕੋਠੜੀ ਗੜ ਮੰਦਰਿ ਏਕ ਲੁਕਾਨੀ ॥
[SGGS: 1178, ਬਸੰਤ ਹਿੰਡੋਲ ਮਹਲਾ ੪]

The gem of God's Naam is hidden in the temple of body's fortress.

Nobility of Naam:

Almost all human beings recite God's name, albeit, by different names such as Waheguru, Satnam, Bhagwan, Krishan, Parmatma, Allah etc. No wonder such sacred words have a special place in the mind and heart of the believers of God? This means that Naam has the power to connect us to God, thus enabling us to lift our spirits physically, mentally and spiritually. No wonder, we are always directed to meditate only on Naam, as is reflected in the hymns below:

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ਅਵਰ ਕਾਜ ਤੇਰੈ ਕਿਤੈ ਨ ਕਾਮ
ਮਿਲੁ ਸਾਧ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਭਜੁ ਕੇਵਲ ਨਾਮ
[SGGS:12, ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੫]

All other deeds are of no use to us.

Join the congregation of saints, and meditate on Naam alone.

ਸੇ ਧਨਵੰਤ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮਿ ਲਿਵ ਲਾਇ ॥
[SGGS:663, ਧਨਾਸਰੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੩]

They alone are wealthy who develop love for Gods Naam (Name).

ਪੁੰਨ ਦਾਨ ਜਪ ਤਪ ਜੇਤੇ ਸਭ ਊਪਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ॥
[SGGS:401, ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੫]

Naam is above all worships, penances, charities, and almsgiving.

DIVINITY OF NAAM

In Sri Guru Granth Sahib (SGGS), we are repeatedly reminded that Naam is an all inclusive every thing in whatever we see, feel, touch, and envision. Indeed, God Himself created Naam at the same time when the cosmic world, including human beings, was designed. This concept is succinctly summarized in the hymn below.

ਆਪੀਨੈ ਆਪੁ ਸਾਜਿਓ ਆਪੀਨੈ ਰਚਿਓ ਨਾਉ ॥
[SGGS: 463, ਸਲੋਕ ਮਹਲਾ ੧]

God Himself created His own self and He also created His Naam (name) at the same time.

ਊਤਮ ਊਚਾ ਸਬਦ ਕਾਮੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਵਖਾਣੈ ਸਾਚੁ ਨਾਮੁ ॥
[SGGS: 1176, ਬਸੰਤ ਮਹਲਾ ੩]

Sublime and lofty is the contemplation (reflection) of Shabad (Naam). Nanak always utters God's True Name.

Since Naam is supremely divine and divinely supreme God's own Word, this requires us to do righteous deeds with our hands, to use our feet to walk towards Truthful way of Living, and to absorb fully the divine vibrations emanating from the presence of our Guru's spirit permeating throughout our environments. We therefore need to make efforts to keep our eyes, mind, heart and brain focused on NAAM and to live our life with and through Naam as our constant companion. This theme is beautifully expressed in the hymn below.

ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਅਚਰਜੁ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਆਪਿ ਸੁਣਾਏ
ਕਲੀ ਕਾਲ ਵਿਚਿ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਪਾਏ ॥
[SGGS: 666, ਧਨਾਸਰੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੩]

God Himself recites the wondrous Naam. In our dark (present) age one obtains Naam only through the Guru.

Because of the majestic supremacy of Naam it is important that we always stay bonded to God's love as advised in the hymn below:

ਹੋਹੁ ਦੈਆਲ ਨਾਮੁ ਦੇਹੁ ਮੰਗਤ
ਜਨ ਕੰਉ ਸਦਾ ਰਹਉ ਰੰਗਿ ਰਾਤਾ ॥
[SGGS: 666, ਧਨਾਸਰੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੩]

Oh (God) become gracious and bless (this) beggar Thy Naam so that we may ever remain deeply bonded with Thy love.

Practicing Naam in our daily life can thus inspire, motivate and guide us to lead, and to continue to lead a righteous, peaceful and God centered life in accordance with the hymn below:

ਸੇ ਜਨ ਧੰਨੁ ਜਿਨ ਇਕ ਨਾਮਿ ਲਿਵ ਲਾਇ॥
[SGGS: 666, ਧਨਾਸਰੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੩]

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Honored are those persons, who focus their attention on Naam alone.

Blessing of Naam:

The treasure of Naam is a divine gift and is bestowed onto us through Divine Grace when we first make an earnest plea from our heart to our Sat-Guru and then to serve our Guru-God unselfishly, as is directed by the hymns below:

ਨਾਨਕ ਦਾਸੁ ਕਹੈ ਬੇਨੰਤੀ ਭਖਿਆ ਨਾਮੁ ਦਰਿ ਪਾਈ ਹੇ ॥
[SGGS: 1044, ਮਾਰੂ ਸੋਲਹੇ ਮਹਲਾ ੩]

Devotee Nanak offers this prayer at Thy door, (Oh God), bless the charity of Thy Naam.

ਬਲਿਹਾਰ ਜਾਏ ਸਦਾ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਦੇਹੁ ਅਪਣਾ ਨਾਉ ॥[SGGS: 988 ਮਾਲੀ ਗਉੜਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੫]

Nanak always surrenders unto Thee, (please) bless Thy Naam

ਗੁਰ ਸੇਵਾ ਤੇ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮ ਧਨੁ ਪਾਵੈ ॥
[SGGS: 664, ਧਨਾਸਰੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੩]

By serving the Guru one obtains the wealth of God's Naam.

ਏਕ ਨਾਮੁ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਓਹੁ ਦੇਵੈ
ਤਉ ਨਾਨਕ ਤ੍ਰਿਸਟਿਸ ਦੇਹਾ ॥
[SGGS: 990, ਮਾਰੂ ਮਹਲਾ ੧]

Nanak says when God blesses the nectarous Naam then one's mind and body stays focused (on the Divine).

Naam Japna (Meditation)

Naam Japna is part of our daily prayer and is performed by recitation, reading, or singing of hymns, which brings inner peace, calmness and bliss to our mind, heart, and body. The practice of Naam Japna involves praising and adoring the Divine while sitting in a comfortable position with focused and attentive mind. The chosen name (referred to as mantra) for Sikhs is "Waheguru" and is spoken softly, or it may be recited silently within one's mind, or it may be part of a formal worship in a group setting such as in our Gurdwaras. The mantra helps to develop and maintain a personal relationship with the Divine, and therefore attachment to material things and fear of death gets eliminated as is admirably illustrated by hymns below:

ਨਾਮੁ ਨਿਧਾਨੁ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਜੋ ਜਪਤੇ ਬਿਖੁ ਮਾਇਆ ਮਹਿ ਨ ਓਇ ਖਪਤੇ ॥
[SGGS: 257, ਗਉੜੀ ਬਾਵਨ ਅਖਰੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੫]

The Guru oriented, who meditate on the treasure of Naam, are not destroyed by the poison of (worldly) attachments.

ਨਾਮ ਜਪਹੁ ਤਉ ਕਟੀਅਹਿ ਫਾਸਾ ॥
[SGGS: 258, ਗਉੜੀ ਬਾਵਨ ਅਖਰੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੫]

Meditating on God's Name, the death's noose is cut off.

ਮਨਹੁ ਨ ਨਾਮੁ ਵਿਸਾਰਿ ਅਹਿਨਿਸਿ ਧਿਆਈਐ ॥
ਜਿਉ ਰਾਖਹਿ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਧਾਰਿ ਤਿਵੈ ਸੁਖੁ ਪਾਈਐ ॥
[SGGS: 752, ਸੂਹੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੧]

Do not forget God's Naam and meditate (contemplate) on it day and night. The way, gracious God keeps thee, find peace in that path.

Naam Promotes Virtuous Living

When we truly practice the teachings of Naam in our real life then Naam becomes our directing, guiding and protective force

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during all our activities to promote our virtuous living, and also enables us to acquire inner strength, contentment, calmness, peace, and bliss, as is reflected in the following hymns:

ਸੇ ਧਨਵੰਤ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਮਾਇ ॥
[SGGS:161, ਗਉੜੀ ਗੁਆਰੇਰੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੫]

Wealthy are those who earn (practice) God's Naam

ਭਜੁ ਮਨ ਮੇਰੇ ਏਕੋ ਨਾਮ ਜੀਅ ਤੇਰੇ ਕੈ ਆਵੈ ਕਾਮ ॥]
[SGGS:193, ਗਉੜੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੫

Oh my mind, meditate only on Naam and it shall be helpful to thy soul (heart, mind).

Consequently, when we pray, recite, contemplate and sing hymns praising the majestic glory of Naam, and obeying its message, then we are ferried across the world ocean in accordance with the hymn below:

ਜਨ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਬੋਲੈ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਬੀਚਾਰੁ ਜੋ ਸੁਣੇ ਕਮਾਵੈ ਸੁ ਉਤਰੈ ਪਾਰਿ ॥ [SGGS: 370, ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੫]

Devotee Nanak utters the divine deliberation, whoever listens and practices it, gets liberated.

It is at this stage that our soul feels the gracious touch of the Supreme Soul, becomes eternally bonded, satiated and gets eventually united with it through Divine grace as is obvious from the hymn below:

ਕਰਨੀ ਸੁਨੀਐ ਜਸੁ ਗੋਪਾਲ, ਨੈਨੀ ਪੇਖਤ ਸਾਧ ਦਇਆਲ, ਰਸਨਾ ਗੁਨ ਗਾਵੈ ਬੇਅੰਤ, ਮਨ ਮਹਿ ਚਿਤਵੈ ਪੂਰਨ ਭਗਵੰਤ, ਹਸਤ ਚਰਨ ਸੰਤ ਟਹਲ ਕਮਾਈਐ, ਨਾਨਕ ਇਹੁ ਸੰਜਮ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਪਾਈਐ ॥
[SGGS: 298, ਥਿਤੀ ਗਉੜੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੫]

Hear the praises (of God) through ears and see the benevolent saints with eyes. Sing the glorious virtues of infinite God with tongue, and contemplate on perfect God in heart. Perform service of saints with hands and feet, Oh Nanak, this is the way to obtain God's grace.

In essence, when we put our trust in God then we are divinely blessed with Naam as a priceless gift. Naam in turn imparts us soothing and calming vibrations to quench the spiritual thirst/hunger of our mind, heart, soul, brain, and other parts of our body. We are thus able to connect with the divine, and acquire a blessed state of godly protection, serenity, and peace as is reflected in the hymns below:

ਇਹ ਲੋਕਿ ਪਰਲੋਕਿ ਸੰਗਿ ਸਹਾਈ ਜਤ ਕਤ ਮੋਹਿ ਰਖਵਾਲੇ ॥
[SGGS: 679, ਧਨਾਸਰੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੫]

God is our constant companion in this world and beyond, and supports and protects us at every place.

ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਰਸਨਾ ਜੋ ਜਪੈ ਤਿਸੁ. ਪੂਰਨ ਕਾਮੁ ॥
[SGGS : 401, ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੫]

Whosoever, recites God's Naam with one's tongue, has his/her affairs completed (by God).

ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮਿ ਸਮਾਵਹਿ ਸਾਚੈ ਸਾਚੇ ਤੇ ਪਤਿ ਹੋਈ ਹੇ ॥
[SGGS: 1045, ਮਾਰੂ ਮਹਲਾ ੩]

Oh Nanak, one who gets absorbed unto Naam, then through the True One, one obtains honor from God. □

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Global Human Rights Movement: Guru Tegh Bahadur's Key Contribution

*PROF. PRITAM SINGH (U.K)**

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The West's discourse on human rights often misses the important contributions that non-Western civilisations have made. The ninth Sikh Guru Tegh Bahadur (1621-75) is one of those key pioneers from the non-Western world whose place in the global human rights is now gradually being recognised. In the collective memory of the Sikhs, and in most narratives of India's medieval history, the martyrdom of the ninth Guru, Guru Tegh Bahadur in Delhi in November 1675 along with his three associates- Bhai Mati Das, Bhai Sati Das and Bhai Dayal Das- is chronicled and rightly remembered with great reverence. However, the higher meaning behind their choice to defy the oppressive power of the then Moghul state and seek martyrdom has remained largely obscured and unexplored. The rise of global human rights movement in the last few decades is enabling us now to search for a higher human rights meaning behind that great Guru's martyrdom.

There are two competing approaches towards human rights - an instrumentalist approach - and an intrinsic worth approach. The instrumentalist approach looks upon human rights as a tool to achieve some pre-conceived political goals and gives birth to sectarianism in dealing with the defence of human rights. The sectarian approach results in the defenders of the human rights defending the rights of those whom they consider as their own-their community, their nation or their ideological and political allies. In extreme cases, this approach results in ignoring the human rights violations of one's opponents or even opposing the protection of human rights of one's opponents. The intrinsic worth approach, in contrast with this, values human rights per se irrespective of whether the protection of human rights pertains to those whom one considers one's own or one's opponents. This approach argues that all human being by virtue of being human, are entitled to certain rights. This approach gives birth to a universalist conception of human rights transcending barriers of ethnicity, religion, nationality, gender or ideology. Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom empowers intrinsic worth and, consequently, universalist conception of human rights.

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It is important to reflect on the circumstances that led the Guru to take the momentous decision to sacrifice his life. The Kashmiri Brahmins who were being persecuted by the then Moghul emperor came to the Guru to seek his support. They had come with the hope that the Guru who was a spiritual leader of great repute would intercede for them with the Moghul emperor. We can imagine that it must have been a difficult decision for the Kashmiri Brahmins to take the decision to seek Guru's support. It was very well known that the Sikh faith founded by Guru Nanak had denounced casteism as a social and cultural practice, and was, therefore, anti-Brahmanical in its teachings.

The emerging Sikh faith had systematically promoted social and religious egalitarianism through institutions such as langar, sangat and pangat which attacked untouchability, one of the central features of Brahmanical world view of social hierarchy. The Kashmiri Brahmins were, therefore, ideological opponents of Guru Tegh Bahadur. In his decision to defend the religious rights of the Brahmins, the Guru was defending the rights of his ideological opponents. This defence of his ideological opponents eventually led to giving his life.

There are many examples in human history of people giving their life for their community or nation or ideology. Such people are certainly of great moral calibre in rising above their self-interest but the moral-spiritual heights to which Guru Tegh Bahadur reached by giving his life to protect the rights of his ideological opponents is unique in human history. Guru Tegh Bahadur can, therefore, be rightly considered as one of the founders of the universal conception of human rights [I have elaborated this further in a TV interview available on You Tube https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AZKdYO0Sz_Q].

This understanding and appreciation of Guru Tegh Bahadur is now enriching the global human rights discourse and he is being acknowledged by the world human rights movement as one of its founders. I wrote a paper some years ago on competing paradigms of human rights theory and practice which was inspired by the universalist vision of Guru Tegh Bahadur.

The paper was dedicated to the Guru's memory. Amnesty International (AI), the London-based human rights organisation known the world over for its unflinching commitment to the protection of human rights, got hold of the paper and had discussions with me and others to explore the human rights significance of Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom.

I was, at that time, compiling a book on global human rights history to mark the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. My aim for

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this book project was to identify key human rights pioneers in each century. This book entitled '**The Long March to Freedom**: Some of the people whose ideas, writings and actions have played a part in the struggle for human rights and justice around the world across the centuries' acknowledges Guru Tegh Bahadur as one of the five eminent human rights pioneers of the Seventeenth Century. The other four are: John Lilburne (1617-57), John Locke (1632-1704), William Penn (1644-1718) and Voltaire (1694-1778).

Some interpretations of Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom that portray him as the defender of Hindu Dharma (the word often used is **Hind di Chadar**) do injustice to the universalist vision and meaning of the Guru's martyrdom by limiting his sacrifice as defence of one community. In the framework of Guru's universal conception of human rights, we can visualise the Guru defending, if the need arose in another context, the Muslim victims of a Hindu oppressive ruler. From this point of view, the magnificent Gurdwara Sees Ganj (the place of the head) in Chandni Chowk, Delhi, built at the site where he was beheaded, should not be considered as a place of religious importance only for Sikhs and Hindus. It should be accorded the status of a place of sacred pilgrimage for the entire global human rights movement. That would be a fitting, though long delayed, recognition of the great Guru's vision of non-sectarian universal human rights. □

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The "Manji" System: An Innvotive Institution

*S. Makhan Singh**

Part - I

Guru Amar Das had prodigious ingenuity to propound innovative ideas which infused glorious sublimity into Sikhism. He cast the concept of 'langar' into a potent catalyst to bring about far-sighted social reforms which acted to erase the deeply embedded scourge of the caste system and also to satiate the famished. The insistence that anybody desirous of meeting him should partake of 'langar' made it an integral part of the Sikh religion. His message was clear, "**pehle pangat, pachhe sangat**" - first sit in a row in the kitchen, then seek the company of thme Guru'.

It had become imperative to take recourse to this system because, with the growing popularity of Sikhism, people in very large numbers started coming into its fold. And the system was consecrated for edification of the followers of Sikhism. Thus Guru Amar Das concretized the institutions of '**sangat**' and '**pangat**' and aptly used daily congregations to foster the tenets of the Sikh faith. The system of 'pangat' and 'sangat' represents the apotheosis of social change and devotion.

Manji - An Innovative System:

Another significant development was the creation of '**manjis**' which bespeaks of the Guru's genius and perspicacity. This showed him as an organiser par excellence. The institution of 'manjis' gave a new dimension to the Sikh movement and helped in consolidating the results of hard work done by the two preceding Sikh Gurus.

In Punjabi 'manji' literally means a cot especially of the simple stringed variety. Someone who commands a high position in society or attains spirituality alone occupies a 'manji' while others sit on the ground in front of him. In the Sikh tradition a 'manji' denoted a responsible religious position conferred upon a prominent Sikh by the Guru. Verily, it was a seat of delegated powers as it represented the central authority of the Guru. When the Guru appointed some leading Sikhs to perform important functions of the 'Sangat' in various parts of the country, it came to be known as 'manjis. "Manja represents the central authority of the Guru, Manji used for a seat of delegated authority".

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Devotion - As the Hall-Mark:

Only the most trusted Sikhs possessed of innate piety, sterling integrity and devotional zeal were granted 'manjis'. In addition to preaching Sikhism they collected offerings from devotees on behalf of the Guru. They were persons who could correctly ingest and carry out the Guru's ideals and were ordained to conduct missionary work individually and collectively through the 'sangat'. the activities of these missionaries were not confined to their native areas. They could work in any area as ordained by the Guru. Specific areas were assigned on the basis of suitability of the incumbent and particular requirements of each area Dubbed as 'manjidars', they espoused the cause of Sikhism doggedly, wholeheartedly and selflessly.

In some cases they went far off into the countryside to show spiritual path to devotees through the Guru's message. While rendering this they always remained in touch with the Guru and paid periodical visits to him alone or with the sangat of the area.

MANJIS' helped in disseminating the knowledge of the Gurumukhi script which ultimately enabled Sikhs to read hymns of the Guru which were circulated in the form of GUTKAS (Small booklets). The Guru ordained learned Sikhs to carry out this sacred work by way of social service and to accept payment only if made voluntarily. This issue was referred to the Guru when he visited village Dalla. Bulla, a Brahmin desired to know if he could accept money for imparting knowledge of Gurumukhi and providing Gutkas to Sikhs. The Guru advised him to do the work as a social service. The importance and effectiveness of the missionary work done by 'manjidars' can be fathomed from the fact that it actuated a large number of fresh people to embrace Sikhism. The 'christening' was performed according to the guidelines adumbrated by the Guru.

The popular method of inducting new entrants was known as '**Charnamrit**'. It was pure water sanctified by washing a toe of the Guru in it. Since the process of initiation required the Guru's presence, it acted as a constraint on the missionary work. The task became more difficult with the growing popularity of Sikhism. It was then that the necessity arose for conferring on 'manjis' the power to import 'Charnamrit' and administer it to converts in the absence of the Guru. This proved to be an expensive and convenient way to receive more people into the Sikh fold and spread the message of Sikhism. The innovation was in concert with the urgent need of the time. The institution of 'manjis' was strengthened subsequently.

Another raisond'etre for evolving the manji system was that thousands of converts wanted to seek personal guidance of the Guru therefore to cope with the situation, the Guru appointed 'manjidars' to perform the task on his behalf so that they may reach out to the public to deliver his message. This is the reason, Dr. Indu Bhushan Bannerji wrote, that the 'manji' system was introduced to cope with the situation brought about by the growing popularity of Sikhism:-

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"That the Sikhs had grown rapidly in numbers and lay scattered throughout the province is evident from the fact that Guru Amar Das found it necessary to devise some means for administering to the local needs of his followers. It was now impossible for the Guru to offer instructions to all his followers in person and the sangat of Sikh congregation that daily met around him no longer sufficed."

The institution of 'manjis' played a significant role in the rapid development and progress of Sikhism. Administration of 'charnamat' to devotees strengthened the movement. Later on it became the privilege of the 'masands' to act as administrators. The 'manjis' and 'masands' had a great role in knitting Sikhs into a powerful community. These 'manjis' became centres of the Sikh community and later these centres were established as gurudwaras. Athen Moronke has written in his book 'Transformation of Sikh Society, "These 'manjis' became meeting places for 'Sikhs and later on temples 'gurudwaras, sprang up in their places" This obviously strengthen the foundation of Sikh society.

Dissemination:

Before we deal with the importance of the manji system, we must look at its background and sacred association with the Gurus. The Gurus undertook yatras widely to bless their devotees individually and collectively. They also organised 'sangats' at important places on such occasions. Naturally the public got the Guru respectfully seated on a cot while they sat on the ground and begged for his sermons. Major Gurmukh Singh writes that even after the Guru's departure, Sikhs treated the place where he stayed as scared. Even in some cases a platform was constructed to commemorate the event which was befittingly called 'manji sahib'. Later on a small shrine or a gurudwara was constructed on the same platform which was also called 'manji' 'sahib'. Subsequently these small shrines were converted into grand buildings. In certain cases such buildings served not only as gurudwaras but also as community centres. These manjidars even went into the interior to spread the Guru's message. They also periodically visited Goindwal, i.e., the headquarters of the Guru, individually and along with devotees. They thus played a useful role in remitting the Guru's message from time to time. Guru Amar Das felt that a large number of people met at religious centres on the occasions of fairs and festivals.

According to Dr. G.S. Chhabra, the Guru wanted to use these occasions for propagation of true congregate at the Baisakhi fair held in 1569 for the first time. Then the Sikh faith celebrated its first birth centenary. From that day celebrations on Baisakhi continued uninterrupted and the Khalsa panth was inaugurated by the 10th Guru on the Baisakhi of 1699. Now Baisakhi has become a National Day for the Sikhs. Manjis played a very important role when the Annual Baisakhi fair became a regular feature. Granthees of manjis participated in the fairs in large numbers along with members of the sangats drawn from the areas of their operation offerings from

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devotees who could not come was also deposited with the Guru on such occasions. Thus, 'manjis' performed another important function of collecting offerings from devotees and remitting to the Guru Darshan.

The novel and innovative institution of 'manjis' has been misinterpreted by some historians as diocese or likened to an emperor administering his empire. It must be clarified that whenever a reference is made to the manji system it is invariably spiritual and in no way territorial. Giani Gian Singh had thrown enough light on it while giving details about granting of 'manji's' to Bhai Manak Chand, Bhai Handal and Gangu Shah by Sri Guru Amar Das. In each case manjis were granted as a reward for devotional services rendered selflessly by the devotees.

This amply makes it clear that the manji system was not a territorial division of the Sikh empire as is wrongly assumed by Macaliffe & followed by some of the writers uncritically. In fact it was a missionary order and its spiritual concept has been properly highlighted. If this essential character of the manji system is understood then there will be no difficulty in understanding the situation that there was more than one Manji at one place, i.e. Dalla or voirowal. Moreover manjis were not created simultaneously. If we accept the idea that the Sikh spiritual power was divided on the basis of a district and province then there should have been a well drafted plan assigning each manji to each district Dr. Fanja Singh while amply clarifying wrote, "The division of the Sikh spiritual power into districts or provinces, or whatever that may be, is irrelevant to manji system as conceived by Guru Amar Dass". This view has been authenticated by Giani Gian Singh, the author of **Panth Parkash**. The fact is as supported by evidence that status of manji to a devotee was granted when he had done meritorious services.

There is no denying the fact that granting of manjis was a continuous process stretching over the period of the Guru's pontificate. Moreover, all prominent Sikhs who were granted manjis had not entered the Guru's faith simultaneously. There is no historical evidence to support that all missionaries were bestowed with the distinguished honour at the same time manjis were only awarded to Sikhs betraying the qualities of piousness, scruples and dedication. In fact only those devotees were chosen for the distinguished honour who correctly understood and meticulously followed the teachings of the Great Gurus. Indeed choice was very judiciously made. Only men of recognised piety & having sterling integrity were bestowed with the honur & distinction of Manji. Moreover all eminent Sikhs who were granted manjis received recognition, honour and responsibility and joined the Court of the Guru from time to time. All these missionaries carried on the message of the Guru in life-long devotion.

□

[End of Part - I
(To be continued)

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Exploring the Realm of Mind

*TEJINDER SINGH MADAN**

ਇਸੁ ਮਨ ਕਉ ਕੋਈ ਖੋਜਹੁ ਭਾਈ ॥ ਤਨ ਛੂਟੇ ਮਨੁ ਕਹਾ ਸਮਾਈ ॥ [SGGS: 330]

"O Brother, Let someone help explore the depth of my mind - and explain: Where does the mind find refuge when the body dies!

The human mind is the most complex entity in human body. It oscillates between the two opposites, viz. Virtue & Vice , Devotion & Desire , Faith & Fear, Love & Hate. Our Happiness & Sufferings are all dependent on the functioning of the mind - our attitude and actions. The dual powers of the mind are amazing, giving us worldly pleasures on the one hand, and miseries & agony on the other, irrespective of our aspirations, social status and intelligence.

Many books have been written to explore the mind, but none speaks about the dynamics and functioning of the human mind. Is there a mechanism that could eradicate sorrows and anxieties, and provide mental Peace & Happiness, freedom from Fear and Worries?

Bhagat Kabir Ji, whose Bani is included in Sri Guru Granth Sahib, states,

"I have not come across anything so precious as the mind is. It is essential to deal with the mind, to mould it from mortality to spirituality, then only the desired results are achieved." [SGGS: 342]

In my endevour to understand the dynamics of the functioning of human mind, over those past two decades and more, I could not find any plausible or conclusive answer. Fortunately for the past eight years, I developed keen interest - and a natural urge from within - courtesy the Satsang, and contemplation on Gurbani in the ambrosial hours of my daily Amritvela, for 2 – 3 hours daily. The ecstatic experience and inspiration, to dwell deep on the message of the Guru , to discover hidden mysteries of Nature and human life, increases day by day.

Now by the Divine grace, I am writing this article, to share the illumined knowledge with the readers of the Sikh Review, to open dialogue in the Readers Forum of the magazine, for a profound understanding of the Mind.

Guru Nanak describe, the Mind Power, in stanza 28 of Japji, as follow"

"ਮਨਿ ਜੀਤੈ ਜਗੁ ਜੀਤੁ"

"Self realization comes with the conquest over our mind ! Is the conquest over the world" [SGGS: 6]

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Guru Amar Das Ji, the third Guru Sahib of the Sikh Faith, has written volumously on the MIND with authority and conviction. To begin with, we shall take, two verses of Gurbani, directly addressed to the Mind, (in Sri Guru Granth Sahib) Exposing the Divine character of the mind as well as the 'Demonic' character of the mind.

"O Mind, realize your primal character of being enlightened source. The Divine Being is always with you. If you realise the fundamental truth, the Cosmic wisdom shall impart happiness, to make you enjoy life, at all times. Then only you will understand "the real purpose of life and death" and will not engross in the mortal attachments. Your mind will be filled with peace and a celebration by virtue of ready accepting of the house of the Lord"

"O Mind, you come to inherit priceless human human life, but lose it to gross VANITY, and ultimately die nursing a false EGO! Engrossed in temptation of the illusory MAYA, O foolish Mind, you would leave this world Brimful with self-conceit and greed. The precious life is thus wasted in agony and repentance." [SGGS: 441]

Guru Nanak Dev in his most powerful and profound composition Japji, scales the extent of Demonic deeds of human beings. Just ponder over the aphorism of stanza 18 of Japji:

"Innumerable are the appalling blind fools, thieves, parasites.

Innumerable are those who established their sovereignty by force, but leave the world empty handed.

Innumerable are sinners and killers who live by slitting other's throats.

So also countless are liars, who live in and spread only falsehood.

Coutless are filthy, live on eating trash.

And countless are slanderer who carry their load of vices."

In the concluding two couplet of the same verse, (stanza 18 of Japji) Guru Nanak has scripted the most dynamic thought - explicated below - soliciting a serious contemplation of the reader (and a feedback) :-

"Nanak, with utmost humility, ponders over and speaks this contemptible deeds and - with due apologies to Almighty - acknowledges that whatever pleases The Divine power that must be a wise pursuit. I am sacrifice unto Thy WILL: cannot fathom Thy Divine wisdom: Thou art formless, everlasting eternal." [SGGS: 4]

Most Scriptures of the world are unanimous that the existence of mind, is AEON - as old as life on the Planet Earth. It is the primary and indeed the most significant - reason behind all - the oceanic waves that reflect the ups and downs of human life.

Now the question arises that if everything good or bad happens in accordance with the WILL of God then how,

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an innocent human being can understand, acknowledge and actualize the WILL of God. Gurbani assures the disciple that all of this is possible. What we need to understand is to accept 'Gurbani's Sermons' and live by them.

Gurbani declares that Nànak came to the world, in person with cosmic wisdom, conferred by the Divine, to spread the ultimate law of TRUTH, to attain infinite happiness , where no sorrow or duality ever exist." [SGGS: 186]

We therefore need to understand the role of mind and its dual operation in subjective and objective missions of human aspirations.

The seed of Anand - or permanent bliss - is sown by the Divine with the birth of every human life. The beauty is that it has to be cultivated, with labour of love, under the guidance of a bonafied Guru, to bear fruit and enjoy the domain of HAPPINESS.

The question is that how the human mind, can make the human beings, achieve the goal of sustainable development and happiness?

My experience is that the study of mind cannot be made in isolation . The functioning of mind has to do with the brain and the body. The trinity works collectively where the mind commands over the brain for the body to conduct and act to fulfill the desires that arises in the mind. The management of working this trinity is the art of living or life skill science. When it functions subjectively it causes pain and pleasure but when it works objectively it emits happiness and satisfaction. The balance between the subjective aspirations and the objective missions, is most difficult but achievable. Gurbani says ,

"The path of Divinity is sharp two edged sword and as thin as the human hair. Those who live in love and obedience of the Divine World they alone can tread the unique tough toilsome path " [SGGS: 918]

Now the larger questions are:

(1). How the mind is drawn to spirituality or mortality, and its effects on the human life?

(2). How its inclinations are fully moulded and sustained in the Spiritual domain at all times?

I prefer the readers and the contributors of the Sikh Review, write and share their views, experiences and understanding on these vital questions, as per Gurmat, to draw sustainable conclusion.

Guru Amardas Ji with utmost love and affection, gives us the clue in the following aphorism .

ਇਸੁ ਮਨ ਕਉ ਕੋਈ ਖੋਜਹੁ ਭਾਈ ॥ ਮਨੁ ਖੋਜਤ ਨਾਮੁ ਨਉ ਨਿਧਿ ਪਾਈ ॥੧॥ [SGGS: 1128]

The explication is as under,

"By pursuing the understanding of the mind, the secrets of its dynamic functioning are revealed. Who engage in constant search, to win over the mind, are blessed with the Grace of NAAM, i.e. the treasure of Cosmic wisdom." □

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Bawa Kartar Singh (1886-1960): Yesteryears' Sikh Scientist who missed the Nobel Prize by a whisker

Hardev Singh Virk and Rajinder Singh***

Abstract : The Nobel Prize is the most prestigious of global awards. The Scientists who are nominated or are asked to propose the candidates, are considered to be eminent persons in their field of research. So far as the India's Chemists are concerned, between 1901 and 1964, only 10 chemists were asked by the Nobel Committee to send proposals for the Chemistry Nobel Prize. Bawa Kartar Singh was one of them. The present article gives a short review of his scientific achievements, his contacts with India's Nobel Laureate, C.V. Raman, nominated (for Nobel Prize) by Bawa Kartar Singh. His devotion to the Sikh faith is also legendary.

Introduction

Jews - like Sikhs - are a minority religious community in the world. But they are better known in the field of science and technology by winning close to 50% of total Nobel Prizes awarded so far by the Nobel Foundation in the world. The Sikh community hardly played any worthwhile role in the field of science education. One of the reason seems to be that even if, Sikhs did good scientific work, they hardly bothered to write about their heroes. Bawa Kartar Singh is such a case, who is hardly known in Sikh circles outside university academia. So far as the present authors are aware, there is not a single biography available for the Sikh Scientist, who was asked by the Noble Committee to send a proposal for the Nobel Prize in Chemistry. We hope that this article motivates the Sikh community at large to appreciate the contribution of their heroes in scientific field also, as they are accustomed to honour their heroes who suffered martyrdom for the cause of religion. The Nobel Prizes, named after the Swedish inventor and industrialist Alfred Nobel, are one of the most prestigious awards. According to the will of the founder, they are awarded to persons for their services in the fields of chemistry, physics, physiology and medicine, literature and peace. The Nobel Prize for Economic Science was

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established by the Swedish Bank, and the first awarded in 1969. Unfortunately, not a single Sikh has won this coveted prize in any field, although Hargobind Khurana and Abdus Salam (both Punjabis, a Hindu and a Muslim) have won it.

Until 1974, the documents regarding the Nobel Prizes were kept secret. Due to the efforts of historians, the Nobel Foundation agreed to give the documents free for research purpose, under the condition that they must be at least 50 years old. Recent research shows in the fields of Chemistry and Physics, India stands in the list of "top-twenty" so far as the number of proposals either received or sent by a nation is concerned. So far as Chemistry is concerned, none of the Indians was ever nominated, with the exception of the Physicist G.N. Ramachandran, who was nominated by the Laureate C.V. Raman for Chemistry Nobel prize. Only 10 Indians were asked to send proposals for this coveted Prize. Bawa Kartar Singh was one of them. In part this case is discussed in "Chemistry and Physics Nobel Prizes – India's Contribution" [1]. Unfortunately, the book is not available in India. The present article intends to highlight the contribution of Sikh community in the scientific world.



Nobel Laureate C.V. Raman and B.K. Singh

A short biography of Bawa Kartar Singh [2, 3]

Bawa Kartar Singh (BKS) was born on 17 April 1886 at village Verowal in district of Amritsar, Punjab. His father, Bawa Jiwan Singh, was a member of the Indian Medical Service. BKS had to discontinue his studies at the D.A.V. School, Lahore, because his father was transferred to Burma. He passed the entrance examination of the Calcutta University in 1903, standing seventh in the order of merit. It is worth mentioning that here he came in contact with the renowned Bengali Chemist from Calcutta, also known as father of the modern Chemistry in India, namely, Prafulla Chandra Ray, the first chemist (along with P.C. Mitter), who in 1935 were asked by the Nobel Committee to propose candidates for the Chemistry Nobel Prize [4].

B.K. Singh proceeded lo England in 1904 for higher studies at the Downing College of the Cambridge University. He obtained Tripos in Natural Sciences in 1906. He continued his post-graduate studies in

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the University of Cambridge and London. In 1910, after finishing his education, he returned to India and joined as Professor of Chemistry at the Govt. College, Dacca. Here, he was inspired by Bengal based chemists like E.R. Watson and P.C. Ray. He left Dacca College in 1918 to join the Govt. College, Lahore, as Head of the Department of Chemistry. Three years later in 1921, he was selected in the Indian Education Service (I.E.S.) and was posted at the Govt. College, Patna (now Patna University). Soon after, he was transferred to Ravenshaw College Cuttack where he worked as Head of Chemistry department till 1936.

We recall an interesting episode from his life in Cuttack. He had no research facility when he joined Ravenshaw College. It so happened that the Mahanth of Emar Math of Puri came to visit this College and BKS took him on a round of his laboratory. He told Mahanth that he was handicapped to carry out his experiments as he did not have a polarimeter. The Mahanth was so impressed by the spiritual aura of BKS that he donated enough money which enabled BKS to purchase the polarimeter for his experiments.

During 1925-26, BKS went to England and France on study leave and worked in the Universities of Cambridge, St. Andrews, and Paris. There and then, he attracted the attention of the scientific world to his brilliant research on the stereochemistry of camphor compounds. In 1936, he returned to Patna and joined as Head of the Chemistry department in Science College (under Patna University) and as the Chemical Adviser to the Govt. of Bihar.

After his retirement from Govt. service (IES) in 1940, he joined as the Professor of Chemistry, University of Allahabad. Six years later, he got the status of an Emeritus Professor from the University. It is during this time that he was asked by the Nobel Committee to send a proposal. From 1948 to 1960 he was honorary Professor at the Benaras Hindu University, Varanasi. It is intriguing to imagine why Punjab University, Chandigarh failed to honour this son of Punjab during his life time, while after his death, memorial BKS lectures are being held in its department of Chemistry to commemorate his scientific contributions.

B.K. Singh's contribution to Sikhism [8]

BKS was a direct descendent of Guru Amar Das Jee, being from a Bhalla family of Verowal. He was a staunch Sikh of the Guru and imbibed the universal spirit of Guru Granth Sahib by being respectful to all other religions. He was deeply interested in Sikh history, especially the Sikh sagas, but fate willed otherwise and he could never return to Punjab to complete his Sikh studies.

During his stay in Patna Science College, he was President of Takhat Patna Sahib Management. His devotion to the Sikh cause is reflected from an episode.

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When Sant Nischal Singh went with his followers on a pilgrimage of Patna Sahib in 1937, Sant Jee was not allowed to pay obeisance by BKS until he agreed to undertake the Kar Sewa of deodi sahib (entrance) which was not complete. The Sant Jee had to stay put for 6 months to complete this project.

Gurdwara Dantan Sahib in Cuttack, in memory of Guru Nanak's visit on way to Jagan Nath Puri, was a thatched hut when BKS joined Ravenshaw College. He and his wife visited Punjab to collect donations and a new Gurdwara was constructed under supervision of BKS on the bank of river Mahanadi. I (HSV) visited this historic Gurdwara in 2005, known as 'Kaliaboda'. The Janamsakhis narrate that Guru Nanak took bath in the river Mahanadi and planted his dantan (usually a cut branch of acacia tree used to clean teeth in rural areas of Punjab, instead of a tooth brush) on the river bank, which grew in to a big tree 'Kaliaboda'. It is a monument to the devotion of Bawa Kartar Singh, a Sikh Scientist of international repute.

Sadly, Bawa Kartar Singh suffered an attack of paralysis at age 74 and passed away at Chandigarh on 16 June, 1960.

Honours and Awards of Bawa Kartar Singh:

-D.Sc. Awarded by University of Dublin, Ireland (1921);

-D.Sc. Awarded by University of Cambridge, UK (1946).

-Professor of Chemistry, Government College, Dacca; Government College, Lahore; Patna College; Ravenshaw College, Cuttack; Science College, Patna; Emeritus Professor, University of Allahabad; Honorary Professor and Associate Director, Punjab Institute of Chemistry, Lahore; and Honorary Professor, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi.

- Chemical Adviser, Government of Bihar

- President, Chemistry Section, Indian Science Congress

- Foundation Fellow of the Indian Chemical Society

- Vice-President of the Indian Academy of Sciences ❑

CORRECTION IN MEDITATION PAGE

OF SR : Dec' 2016

In the english translation of Gurbani Shabad in Meditation page of December 2016 issue – three words painting, beguiling and hangman's have been wrongly spelt.

Typo error is sincerely regretted. *– Ed - SR*

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Life's Goal: The Choice is Yours - Always!

*K S Ahluwalia**

Paradoxically, being born, living and dying are our destiny. Is fear to be my constant companion till eternity? The Sikh perspective is to be rid of fear, so that you can find its depth. Sometimes it happens that fear is not deep but extremely shallow!

Sharing an anecdote : A man walking in the night slipped and fell from a rocky path. Afraid, he would fall down thousands of feet, because he knew that just at the edge of the path was a very deep valley, he grabbed hold of a branch that was over-hanging the edge. In the darkness of night he could see below him, a bottomless abyss. He shouted, and his own shout echoed back - no one was there to hear him.

Can we imagine that man, and his never ending torture, through that never - ending night? Every moment, there was death below, his hands were becoming cold, he was losing his grip; but he managed to hold on and, as the sun came out, he looked down and his being erupted in laughter!

There was no abyss, just six inches below his feet was a rock ledge. He could have rested the whole night, slept well, as the ledge was big enough, but instead, the whole night for him, was a traumatic nightmare.

Form my personal experience, I, with certainty, can state that the fear is no more than six inches deep any time. Now it's up to us whether we want to go on clinging to the branch and turn our life into a nightmare or we would willingly give away the branch to stand on our own feet.

Because there is Nothing to Fear.

Fear is nothing more than understanding and accepting the insecurities of life- insecurities that are not real. It is non-substantial as one's shadow- negative; and many times it creates a great impact on us, as in a jungle when the night is approaching, one is frightened of one's own shadow, consequently, running wild thinking the shadow to be real- like a rope mistaken as snake and when reality dawns, you not only laugh heartily on your stupidity, but also share, excitedly, with your loved ones.

Yet most of us, are fearful of fear as it shakes our foundations from the very core.

The moment it happens, fear turns into a nightmare, whose hangover persists for

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a long time. Chemical reactions in physical self, as perspiration, heavy breathing, tears, hot flushes are common and, if this persists over a time span, dichotomy in one's being and existence is noticed - one starts doubting oneself for everything and looks for excuse of blaming all and sundry. Yearning for sympathy by being a great story teller where one is designed to be viewed as the victim.

Amusingly we are afraid of the unknown - thought being that we will lose whatever little happiness we have collected along the way, the acquisitions, the social prestige, the status, it all seems to be dropping away as we move ahead. Thus we cling, devise ways and means to furiously protect it. We simply have build our houses on them which incidentally was the bridge we needed to cross. We start living there- our thoughts get fixated - we consider that as Utopia, bliss. Thus a great resistance is noticeable in moving forward because moving ahead means leaving behind all that we have now.

Hence our oft quoted statement is ' let the time come, when I am old, when death is at hand, when all I have begins to drop, only then will I move forward! I thus have nothing to drop, nothing to worry about. Yet the closer we are to death, the tighter is our grip, and as death approaches we close our fists more tightly: observe most elder people are a living example of what misery is all about- they are paranoid that what they have been holding for ages, is now slipping out- hence are extremely possessive, defensive!

At this juncture they needed to be flowering with ecstasy, beauty, grace - their poise being simply matchless. One observes beautiful children, young people sometimes, but beautiful old people are rarity. Remember freedom is beautiful, while attachment is slavery.

Let's examine what Fear is all about : Fear is made of ignorance of one's own self. One fear- countless manifestations! Deep inside I may not be' . Interestingly in a way it's true that I am not. Godliness is, I am not. The host is not, the guest is. And because I am suspicious - and my suspicion is valid, I desist to look in. Hence go on pretending that I am; knowing very well that if I look in I am not. A shocking paradox!

It is not intellectual, it is existential. it is in my very own guts, the feeling that' I may not be. It's better not to look in. Thus go on looking out'. At least it keeps me fooled, it keeps the illusion intact that **'I am'**. But because this feeling of **'I amness'** is false, it creates fear. You know that anything can destroy it, any deep encounter can shatter it. It can be shattered by love, or by a serious disease, or seeing someone die. It's extremely fragile and yet I am managing it somehow by not looking in.

Sikh ethos changes the goal post of what fear is all about. Interestingly of

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seeking ways to resolve fear, it talks about putting fear into fear- it's not problem solving, its giving what creates a problem a bigger problem, such that the concept of problem disappears, dissolves totally, fully, completely.

Whenever the Masters faced a hostile event - there weren't any justifications created- no excuse invented, no sympathy asked or got, **no trembling, no shivering, no dissonance in thoughts - the issue was dealt fair and square - the issue was challenged, resolved and moving forward was the next logical step.**

A complete harmony in thoughts, actions and being was witnessed. They weren't tense, they were ready. They weren't afraid or dodging the situation; they simply met it in the open - with poise, grace, innocence and by being centred. No amounts of pulls, threats, coercion had any impact on them. They were immersed inside their Eternity-where nothing is out of place - where everything is in place, and there is place for everything. They were spontaneous, having an inner understanding of how to be one with the inner Nature of Life.

They had expanded inside - as faith expands, it simply becomes more and more powerful. Then there aren't any twos left. It is - awareness not a specialized knowledge: "ਗੁਜ਼ਰ ਜਾ ਅੱਕਲ ਸੇ ਆਗੇ ਕਿ ਯਿਹ ਨੂਰ ਚਿਰਾਗੇ-ਰਾਹ ਹੈ - ਮੰਨਜ਼ਿਲ ਨਹੀ"

[Dr. Sir. Mohd. Iqbal]

Our Ten Gurus have demonstrated repeatedly, get on with the situation as it is, take the jump. You are already on the diving board, don't simply stand, move, jump, face the situation - desist from pregnating excuses - **An ocean of bliss is waving its hands for you.** You can take a jump. The sun is hot, the heat intense, you are sweating, and the cool ocean is rolling below. You can, of course take a jump and be in the cool waters. You simply are, fixated on the diving board - amusingly, the diving board is ready to help you, it has springs, they can toss you below. But you are standing there sweating in the sun! But since you aren't thinking about the jump, the diving board is quiet, the cool ocean down below is watching and amused at yourself, creating misery of sweating.

Masters have exalted me to choose, decisively, as I only have the power to effect a decision. Its fine with them if I choose to wait, but imperative for me is to effect a decision. I don't want to be in cold water and chose to perspire in the sweltering heat, again is a decision.

But desist from being in two minds - we don't want to jump in the ocean and would like to enter the cold water, we know also that the sun is hot and we are sweating profusely, yet we cannot take the jump now. We do wish to jump. To leap forward. But please let us wait longer. How can we simply rush into it. We will do it tomorrow or at an

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opportune moment. Interestingly that moment never arrives!

This confused, fragmented approach stops my growth. By and by, it makes me inert; I get stuck in the place I am in. I thus become used to this sweating, the heat that I would like to jump - but tomorrow! The sun will continuously to burn me down, it will welcome me, invite me to enjoy its sweltering heat and while I go on, sweating profusely, the ocean will keep calling' come if you like, i am ready for you, its your pleasure. The cool waters are ready to receive you'. The diving board will keep saying' I'm ready to bounce .

The real harm is not that I am enveloped with misery, it's due more to the Reality that this misery is a product of my indecisiveness. . If I desire to suffer then choose suffering willingly.

It is Important to make a decision - choose in the now, with full authority and responsibility. Be a true Sikh of the Guru.

Lacking decisiveness, I will simply go on drifting, pushed here and there by the society, pulled and pushed from all sides, fragmented, fractured and confused to the core. If I stay indecisive, the state of unconsciousness will become more and more condensed. ❑

"Ik Onkar Satgur Prasad"

There is only one God. Only the grace of true Guru can guide us to Him

Guru Granth Sahib is forever true:

- For it contains the message of one God
- It is for all times Guru of the Sikhs
- It was compiled by Guru Arjun, the fifth Guru
- It contains verses by six Gurus as well as saints like, Kabir, Farid, Namdev, Trilochan, Ravidas, Ramanand, Dhana, Jaidev and Surdas.
- The verses are set in 31 musical raagas (melodies)
- Most verses are easy to understand
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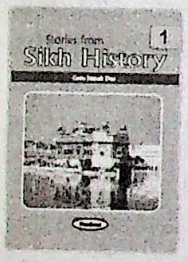
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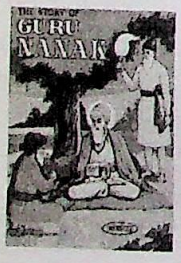
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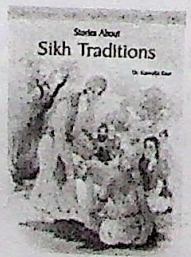
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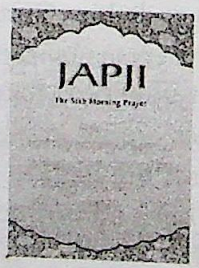
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Finding a voice for global Sikhism

In Search of a Genuinely Representative 'Parliament'

*INDERJIT SINGH JAIJEE**

Sikhism maintains that spiritual and temporal authority (miri-piri) are complemen-tary but the difficulty of realising this ideal in practice is clearly illustrated by the relationship between the Sriromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee and the Sriromani Akali Dal.

The SGPC is a large, rich, powerful and influential institution but, at least in theory, it is not a political institution. The primary function of the Sriromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee is management of 82 historic gurdwaras in Punjab, Haryana and Himachal. It also manages about 350 small gurdwaras and several institutions such as colleges, hospitals and museums. However, the prestige of the SGPC has gone far beyond its managerial role and, together with the five Takhts, it claims to be an arbiter of what is and is not acceptable to the Sikh religion – a subject that should properly be the domain of the Jathedars of the five Takhts.

The Sriromani Akali Dal is a political party and since independence this party has frequently formed the government of Punjab. The party's name harks back to the 1920's when it led the agitation to oust mahants who ran gurdwaras for their personal profit. The agitation succeeded and the mahants were replaced by the SGPC which was set up by legislation in 1925 . However, SAD's character has drastically changed since its early days.

While the original SAD proclaimed itself a party of, by and for the Sikhs, modern electoral law does not recognise a party that identifies itself along religious lines. To contest an election in India, a party must be secular and accept members without distinction of caste or creed. For the past 30 years, the SAD has identified itself as a party of all Punjabis, Sikh and non-Sikh alike. There is justice in the demand that the Sriromani Akali Dal give up the name it had when it was a Sikh party.

The SGPC's annual budget for 2016 was Rs 1,064.14 cr. Given the SGPC's great wealth, it is no mystery why the SAD wants to control it, but by definition the two bodies are incongruous. Imagine the British Labour Party controlling the Church of England. The SGPC has more in common with a party-sponsored labour union than with a house of elected representatives. SAD control has compromised the religious character of the SGPC to such an extent that few Sikhs feel any respect for it now. It is regarded as just

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another front organisation and its members are seen as interchangeable with SAD politicians. This is bound to happen when a religious institution remains under the thumb of a political party.

The SAD's control of the SGPC is no secret. Election to the 170 member house of the SGPC is conducted by the Union Government and the campaigns for this election are no different from the campaigns for Assembly or General Elections. Voters are wooed with money and liquor or they are intimidated by the candidate's thugs.

In past elections, only a handful of candidates put up by political parties other than the SAD have managed to win. One would suppose that among 170 persons there would be divergent views on just about any issue, but one never hears of opinions being aired or issues debated when the SGPC sits. Silence hangs over the SGPC house. The only SGPC member who is ever heard from is the president.

If members of the SGPC are retainers of the SAD, the SGPC president is a super-retainer. Nominally, the president is elected by the house. What actually happens is that the house ratifies whoever is picked by the SAD.

In the US these days one often sees a bumper-sticker that asks **WHO WOULD JESUS VOTE FOR?**

One could easily import the same question in Punjab with regard to the SGPC poll: **WHO WOULD THE GURUS VOTE FOR?**

What do voters look for when they cast their votes in an SGPC election? All candidates are adept at making a show of piety and strict adherence to Sikh tenets. Close inspection of their records and behaviour may reveal a different story. One cannot help but think of the scribes and Pharisees of 1st century Palestine

The voting pattern suggests that voters want to be on the winning side; they cast their vote for that party that they figure has the edge.

How little personal qualities of the candidates count can be seen from the case of a past president of the SGPC. In 2012 after a 12-year trial, the SGPC's first woman president was convicted of murdering her daughter for marrying a man of her choice. Her political stature has enabled her remain out of prison ever since her conviction and she remains highly active in the SAD and the SGPC. This woman was president of the SGPC at the time of her daughter's death and after the crime came to light she was re-elected.

The Gurus preached humility but self-projection is essential for politics. One excludes the other. Sikhs are reminded of the importance of humility every morning when they read Japji Sahib .

The SGPC's wealth comes from the paisa-by-paisa offerings of the Sikh Sangat. It is with this money that the Sangat is supposed to build and maintain SGPC property and conduct dharm-prachar. Increasingly, the focus has shifted from dharm-prachar to constructing lavish buildings.

It has become common for the president of the SGPC to put his name on

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buildings erected with SGPC funds, as though the cost of construction had come out of his own pocket. Foundation stones bearing the name of the SGPC president or any person negate the Guru's message of humility and have no place in as much as the buildings have been constructed with funds contributed by the Sangat. They should be removed.

Taking credit for works – even good works – is contrary to the Sikh value of humility. But as already mentioned, in the SGPC, strict adherence to SAD requirements by far outweighs adherence to Sikh tenets.

Aside from its managerial role, the SGPC also appoints Jathedars of the Akal Takht, Sri Keshgarh Sahib Takht and the Sri Damdama Sahib Takht. Jathedars of Sri Patna Sahib Takht and Huzoor Sahib Takht are appointed by the managing boards of those gurdwaras. The Takhts predate the SGPC by more than 300 years. The first was established at Amritsar by Guru Hargobind in 1609. This is the Akal Takht which stands just in front of the Harmandar Sahib. It is the most important of the five Takhts. Takht Sri Patna Sahib was established in 1666, followed by Takht Sri Keshgarh Sahib in 1699, Takht Sri Damdama Sahib in 1705 and Takht Sri Hazoor Sahib in 1708. The Takhts show the geographical spread of Sikhism.

Historically, the Takhts served as rallying points for the sangat. In centuries past, these Jathedars led the Panth through periods of conflict and in that sense, their role might be considered political. In modern times, the Jathedars have come to embody the conscience of the Panth, setting the moral yardstick in terms of Sikh maryada. The present five Takhts came into being at places where the Gurus remained for some time. Today, the Sri Guru Granth Sahib is accepted as the Guru. Guru manio Granth expands the possibility for the establishment of Takhts. Wherever Sikhs are settled in sufficient numbers and have put down roots could be considered legitimate location for a Takht. Why should the Sikhs of the UK, Canada or the USA not have rallying points just as the Sikhs in India have?

Today the Sikh population of India accounts for about 90 per cent of all the Sikhs in the entire world. Of the remaining 10 per cent, most Sikhs abroad are found in the UK, Canada and the USA. So far there has been no effort to create an institution through which the global Panth can articulate its interests. In the absence of such an institution, it falls to the Punjab-

Countrywise Sikh Population Top 10 (2015)

Rank	Country	No. of adherents
1.	India	19,000,000
2.	United Kingdom	707,000
3.	USA	500,300
4.	Canada	405,000
5.	Malaysia	100,000
6.	Australia	72,000
7.	Italy	71,000
8.	Thailand	70,000
9.	Pakistan	50,000
10.	Philippines	30,000

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centric SGPC to perform this role, even though its functioning is dictated by the non-Sikh Sriromani Akali Dal. Guru Nanak did not confine himself to Punjab; he journeyed westward to Mecca, eastward as far as Dhaka, north into Tibet and south to Sri Lanka. Sikhs today have the opportunity to fully realise the global message of the Guru. A more broad-based organisation would also help to insulate the Panth from manipulation by national or state governments or political parties.

POINTS FOR DISCUSSION

1. The Constitution declares India to be a secular state. The State is not supposed to concern itself with any religion. In view of this principle, should the Union Government conduct elections to the SGPC. For that matter, should the State be involved with Shrine Boards or Wafqs? If State involvement in the SGPC, and in Shrine Boards and Wafqs is acceptable why doesn't the State involve itself in the appointment of Christian bishops and Jain munis?

2. The SAD is a secular party. It is allied with the BJP which in turn is supported by the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Samaj, an organisation that exists to defend and promote Hindu interests. Why should SAD influence over a Sikh institution, namely the SGPC, be tolerated.

3. What can religious-minded Sikhs do to remove un-Sikh influence from their institutions?

4. Should the present SGPC – which is limited to Punjab, Haryana and Himachal – be scrapped and replaced by a body that would represent not only Sikhs from all over India but Sikhs from all over the world. ❑

REFERENCES

1. SAD arose out of opposition to the mahants that controlled the gurdwaras in the 19th and eaqrly 20th centuries. The outcome of the SAD's successful agitation was the creation of the SGPC.
2. The SAD is not the only entity that takes a close interest in the SGPC. since the Union Govt. conducts elections to the house of the SGPC and the Govt. of India also indirectly cast a shoadow on this body.
3. Woe unto, scribes and Pharises, hypocrities! For ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleaness.
4. Jagir Kaur's daughter Harpreet Kaur was found dead under mysterious circumstance on April 20, 2000. On Sept 23, 2004, when she was facing trial, Bibi jagir Kaur was re-elected president of the SGPC. She was Punjab Chief Minister Paraksh Singh Badal's choice for the post.
5. Teerath, Tap, Daya dat daan, Je ko pave til ka maan, Sab gun tere, main nahin koi, Vin gun keete bhagat na hoye. Going on pilgrimage, performing austerities and offering alms - whoever feels proud of such things, whatever merit he might have gained is reduced to zero. All virtue is Yours, naught is mine, Whoever claims virture is no devotee 21st pauri of Japji Sahib.

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The 'Chemistry' of a Sikh

*Dr. Jasbir Singh Chawla**

It is like the formation of a water molecule. Two atoms of Hydrogen and one atom of Oxygen Constitute a molecule of Water which is a Compound whereas both of its constituents a elements. Water, the reaction-product, is constitutionally and chemically different from Hydrogen as well as Oxygen. It is, in fact, neither Hydrogen nor Oxygen.

Similarly, a Sikh Neither a Hindu nor a Muslim. It is different. Although in the composition of Sikhism, one may find two parts of Hinduism and one part of Islam but the resultant is neither of the two. It is like a Chemical Change due to which the product acquires different physical and chemical properties than its constituents.

For example, both hydrogen and oxygen are gaseous at normal temperature and pressure whereas water is a liquid at the same environmental conditions. Water is heavier than both and has a new range of applications owing to its changed characteristics.

Water is indispensable till it preserves its most important qualities, that is, till it remains WATER, that is, it gives life, quenches the thirst, cools, controls the fire and so on and so forth. If it starts behaving like Hydrogen or Oxygen it may lose its reliability and people may be skeptical about its nature and also doubt the very change that produced it.

It was the Tenth Guru, Guru Gobind Singh ji, who could finally bring about this change in the disciples of Guru Nanak when he baptized them into Khalsa. The Nanakpanthies, all over India, were undergoing the process of qualitative transformation, turning into better and pure individuals (Khalis) under the spiritual guidance of Sikh Gurus since 1490 AD.

Guru Nanak, the first Guru himself, initiated this process by travelling far and wide across length and breadth of Hindustan during his four Udasies to propagate his ideas on the purity of a person and motivate them to be a true Hindu or Momin or whatever Faith. However, unlike a material - change, the mental change is a difficult one, because of the external forces influencing the social system and Multiple Activation Energy Barriers in the kinetics of the process.

The probabilities of reversion and aversion are prevalent at all the barrier

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stages and therefore this historical change took a long time. To make the change irreversible, the tenth Guru had to put some opposing factors (inhibitors) into the mechanism like Latent Energy in the water-molecule which forbids and hinders its dissociation back into hydrogen and oxygen. Five K's are the symbols of the Latent Energy which had been bestowed upon the Khalsa. Ample number of times the history has proved and demonstrated the enormity of this energy like the Electrical Energy required for the Electrolytic Dissociation of Water back into Hydrogen and Oxygen atoms! Gurus utterings to this phenomenon are very clear-

"ਜਬ ਲਗ ਖ਼ਾਲਸਾ ਰਹੇ ਨਿਆਰਾ, ਤਬ ਲਗ ਤੇਜ ਦਿਉ ਮੈਂ ਸਾਰਾ ।ਜਬ ਇਹ ਗਹੈ ਬਿਪਰਨ ਕੀ ਰੀਤ, ਮੈਂ ਨਾ ਕਰੋਂ ਇਨ ਕੀ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਤ ।

As long as Khalsa remains Unique, it will get the Energy. When it starts behaving like Pandas (Brahminsi), I shall not empower them.

What is Bipran ki reet or Brahminical Tradition? The Guru has explicitly indicated that khalsa should never behave like Brahmins (Bipra) and follow their (reet) traditions blindly. The Khalsa, though like Brahmins is required to be strictly vegetarian, teetotaller , away from all types of addictions, fully devoted to the NITNEM and have completely GURUMUKH attitude towards life, obeying the RAHIT- MARYADA. But he is not a karamkandi(rituals_lover). He is a person who believes in acquiring virtues in life, performing good deeds which are useful for all Mankind. He worships one GOD (EKONKAR) through the practice of virtues, as suggested by Gurbani:

"ਸਭਿ ਗੁਣ ਤੇਰੇ ਮੈ ਨਾਹੀ ਕੋਇ ॥ ਵਿਣੁ ਗੁਣ ਕੀਤੇ ਭਗਤਿ ਨ ਹੋਇ ॥" [JAPJI SAHAB,PAURI 21] and therefore does not give undue weightage to the maintenance of rituals over the purity of heart. Khalsa does not practice the business of religion. That is , he is not a 'broker' of warships. An individual pays homage to his or her GOD directly, prays (or address) Him directly without the help of any middleman. it is a connection from the heart and therefore actually does not require any material decoratives like (dhoop-deep_agarbatti_chandan, etc.) However, if the decorums are to be met and the worshipping procedures are to be adhered to; this should be not be over-emphasized to the extent that it becomes a drama, and essence of the whole spiritual activity disappears. **Khalsa has to be true in letter and spirit i.e. he should practice what he preaches, as Guru Nanak had indicated while commenting on Hindu and Musalman.**

ਸ਼ੁਭ ਅਮਲਾਂ ਬਾਜੋ ਦੋਨੋ ਰੋਈ (Both shall repent without truthful practices/living).

It is the karma (action or deeds) which matters. The Cemistry of a Sikh implies to the actions and therefore takes utmost care of the Society and Surroundings. If any of his neighbour is hungry, any of his fellow-being is helpless,any of his country-men is

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in distress Khalsa does not sleep out or remains idle. His chemistry instantaneously responds to the situation:

"ਦੇਹ ਸਿਵਾ ਬਰ ਮੋਹਿ ਇਹੈ, ਸੁਭ ਕਰਮਨ ਤੇ ਕਬਹੂੰ ਨਾ ਟਰੋਂ,, ਨਾ ਡਰੋਂ ਅਰਿ ਸੋ ਜਬ ਲਾਏ ਲਰੋ ਨਿਸਚੈ ਕਰ ਅਪਨੀ ਜੀਤ ਕਰੋ ।"

(Oh God! Give me the strength that I never falter from performing the good deeds! May I not fear the Enemy and always determine to win!)

The 'Chemistry' of the Sikh obeys the same rule as evinced in the kinetics of a chemical reaction. The Law of Mass Action suggests that it is not the mass or Quantity alone that determines the direction of a chemical change.it is rather, the product of mass (Quantity) and Quality (concentration / activity co-efficient) , that matters.in other words, the Quality of the reactants and products in a chemical equation is equally important, that affects the nature of the change - reversible or irreversible! A small quantity of the substance but with large reactivity can lead the change forwardly .

Oh the contrary, huge quantity of the material butwith little purity (reactive portion) may not even start the change,even on heating, and willslow down to finally halt the change -reaction demanding cleaning of the wastage.

The sanctity of this rule had been verified in the battle field everywhere in the world, when handful of the devoted soldiers defeat a big hired army which fights for the sake of salary. An equilibrium is gained when the velocity of forward and backward reactions are the same andthere the kinetics of the reaction stop.

It was this Quality - consciousness in Disciples (Sikhs) which was aimed to be brought by ten Sikh Gurus.

It took time because changing the chemistry of a person was a gradual process. Beginning with the spiritual awakening of the Hindu masses, bringing them to a common platform by removing the caste-barriers amongst them, giving right of admission to one and all to the Harimandir and fostering the feeling of equality through the conceptof Sangat and Pangat were such measures of transformation which instilled new zeal in the slave Hindu community in Punjab.

This was in tune with the wave of social reforms going on in the rest of the country. However, the political rivalry in Mughal ruling class and family coupled with Feudal system dominating in the society posed strong constraints and resistances to the efforts of gurus. Both quality and quantity of the Sikh disciples was not enough to compete with the opposite forces. The fifth guru was martyred in Lahore by Emperor Jahangir. After few years, to avenget his injustice an armed revolt was led by Guru Har Gobind Sahib. The enemy, though in large number, was defeated by the revolutionaries. However, Sikhs were too

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small in number and hardly prepared to overthrow the empire.

A 'diplomatic' truce (an equilibrium) was maintained till the Guru Gaddi of Ninth Guru. In fact, there was a mysterious confusion even about the existence of any Guru and the Nanak's growing number of disciples,though filled with the spiritual qualities, were directionless. It was the exemplary courage exhibited by Guru Teg Bahadur Ji that challenged the policies of coercion and Islamization of india forcibly. His supreme sacrifice for the national cause lit the spirit of Do or Die in common Hindu masses.The tenth Guru armed them with the necessary qualities of valour and sincerity to fight the tyranny of the Emperor Aurangzeb.The Guru examined their quality before declaring WAR on the Moghul kingdom. After selection of PUNJ P YARE (The Five Most- Beloved),when he was satisfied that Khalsa was full of the qualities of a SAINT-SOLDIER and self-sufficient, he could claim- "ਸਵਾ ਲਾਖ ਸੇ ਏਕ ਲੜਾਊਂ, ਤਬੈ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਨਾਮ ਕਹਾਊਂ ," meaning that Aurangzeb's hired army is just no cause of fear because the warrior spirit in every Khalsa (the changed chemistry) is qualitatively equivalent to hundreds of thousands of enemy-force! To ascertain the stability of this belief, so that no reversal of the change takes place, He bestowed Khalsa with Amrit (Nectar), the source of the Latent Energy. Khalsa (a piece of land which is directly controlled by the Central power; similarly a person which is under the control of Akal Purukh) is never shaken from his stand, does not revert back, does not compromise with his convictions, come whatsoever! And the history has numerous example to quote - be it medieval or modern period! □

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The Non-Violent Struggle to 'LIBERATE' Guru-Ka-Bagh

*PRINCIPAL SAWAN SINGH (USA)**

The Akali struggle at Guru –Ka-Bagh is a landmark in the history of the Gurdwara Reform Movement. During the struggle in early 1923, the Akalis demonstrated the efficacy of the strategy of 'non-violent' and peaceful resistance. The repression resorted to by the Government was met with patient sufferings by the peaceful Akalis, and their firm faith won the sympathy of all the Indians, while it shook the imperial power who realized that immoral and brutal use of power was ineffective against the non-violent spiritual struggle of the Sikhs.

The Gurdwara at Guru- Ka- Bagh

Some 12 miles from Amritsar, there are two historical Gurdwaras in memory of Guru Arjan Dev and Guru Tegh Bahadur. Eversince the Ninth Master planted a garden, this spot came to be known as Guru -Ka- Bagh i.e. Guru's own Garden. In 1921, it was simply a mere grove of Kikar trees The Gurdwara had been in the possession of a corrupt Mahant Sundar Das,who kept two mistresses (Isro and Jagdei) and indulged in immoral practices. He had also illicit relations with other women of bad reputation.

When The Golden Temple and some other Gurdwaras came under the control of the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabbandhak Comittee (S.G.P. C.) the Akali reformers turned their attention towards Guru- Ka-Bagh. On 31st January, 1921, some Sikhs under the leadership of Daan Singh persuaded the Mahant to improve his ways He agreed to serve under a committee of 11 members appointed by the S.G.P.C and to take Amrit. After the massacre at Nankana Sahib, the Mahant went back on his promise and indulged in old practices.

Start of the Non- violent Struggle

Shiromani Committee: Eventually the S.G.P.C took over the management of the Gurdwaras in August,1921. One day some Sikhs cut a dry Kikar tree from the land attached to the Gurdwara for cooking the meals in the community kitchen (Langar). The Mahant complained to the police. The state authorities used this minor incident as a convenient excuse to suppress the Akalis. The pro-Mahant police arrested five Sikhs, and sentenced to six months imprisonment and a fine of Rs.50 each.

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The S.G.P.C felt that this was a gross violation of the Sikh rights as the land belonged to the Gurdwara. This insignificant incident became an issue between the powerful government and peaceful Akalis supported by the public opinion. The S.G.P.C. organized agitation on a scale hitherto unseen in the Punjab. To assert the right to chop wood from the land attached to the Gurdwara for the free community kitchen and to protest against the official high handedness, squads - of five volunteers each, started marching from the Akal Takht to Guru-ka-Bagh. A wave of enthusiasm spread in the whole state and volunteers started coming from far and wide.

The Struggle gains Strength:

The number of volunteers increased and in the last week of August, the number of persons peacefully courting arrest was above 200 daily. Every morning, the prospective members of the squad assembled at the Akal Takht and took a solemn vow to go for sacrifice and under all circumstances to remain non-violent in word and deed. Following a short sermon in which they were to recall the sacrifices of their ancestors, they would march in formation to Guru-Ka-Bagh singing sacred hymns. There was distinct rivalry amongst the volunteers to see who would sacrifice the most. Spectators would line the roads leading to the shrine, offer them water and shower them with flower petals.

Savage strategy adopted by Govt. to Suppress the Struggle:

The such jatha had to pass various areas and bridges where the volunteers were stopped by police and beaten with sticks in order to disable them from proceeding further. They would sit down on the ground singing, **'Waheguru, Waheguru, Satnam, Satnam ji.'** They would continue to suffer till they all became unconscious - or exhausted due to severe beating. They were dragged and kicked by burtal police under the British control. Such fierce beating was faced by the Akalis on daily basis. Not once was the **oath of non-violence** broken. These men had the choice to have their beating stopped, but they chose to remain true to their vow.

All the Sikhs who managed to reach Guru-Ka-Bagh were beaten mercilessly and arrested on charges of rioting, 'theft and trespass'. Soon the officials realized that arrest and long sentences could not overcome the Akalis as the number of volunteers who courted arrest had swelled to 4,000. The Akali gatherings at Guru-Ka-Bagh were declared unlawful assemblies. Carriers taking supply were also prevented and the provisions and the medical supplies were seized. Squads were prevented from reaching Amritsar by rail or road. All the preventive measure failed, the agitation continued and the wave of enthusiasm spread.

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Impact on Public Opinion

The prolonged and burtal use of brutal force on non-violent Akalis had a profound impact on the public. Prominent Hindu and Muslim leaders and members of Legislative Council visited the Guru-Ka-Bagh. Representatives of papers like Manchester Guardian, London Times and National Herald also witnessed the brutal behavior of the police. Their statements and reports, when published in newspapers in India and aboard, aroused public opinion against the brutal policy of the Government. An American cinematographer, captain. A.L. Verges filmed the beatings of the Akalis and produced a short film entitled "Exclusive picture of India's Martyrdom". **He described the Akali struggle unique in human history and a peaceful rebellion against the authority. In a public meeting attended by many thousands at Jallliawalan Bagh, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya criticized the brutality, and wanted an immediate end to it. Rev. C.F, Andrews, a Christian missionary, in his eye-witness account of the struggle and sufferings at Guru-Ka-Bagh, described the official action as: "inhuman, brutal, foul, cowardly and incredible to an Englishman ,and a moral defeat of England". During his meeting with the Governor of the Punjab, he told him that he had seen with his own eyes ' a hundred Christs' being crucified at Guru-Ka-Bagh, and urged him to stop the merciless beating of peaceful agitators.**

The Government changed the Methods:

All these factors forced the Government to change the method of operation against the Akalis, but the aim of suppressing the movement and to break the Akali organizations did not change. The Government decided to take future official action at a remote place to avoid publicity. Army was called to help the police. Long barbed wire entanglements were erected around the place under dispute. To decrease the time that a constable took to disable an Akali, a booklet was published. Policemen were trained in administering blows on the private parts of the body.

Determined Protesters:

These measures too did not discourage the Akalis and the number of those Courting arrest increased. The Akalis treated the march to Guru-Ka-Bagh as a pilgrimage. Total number of arrested Akalis had gone up to 8000 and jails could not accommodate them. The Akali squads contained a large number of ex- soldiers. In the end of October and beginning of Nov. 1922, squads of military pensioners courted arrest. It was likely to create excitement in the Sikh units of the Indian Army. There was a rumour that the Sikh students of the Khalsa College, Amritsar would also march to Guru-Ka-Bagh. Propaganda in the press, reports of national leaders, statements of press representatives and publicity committee of

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the S.G.P.C. exposed the police brutality and unnerved the Govt. All these factors alarmed the Govt. and need for an immediate solution to save further loss of prestige was under consideration of the Govt.

The Government 'Relents'

The government persuaded and encouraged a retired state engineer, Sir Ganga Ram to lease the disputed land of the Gurdwara from the Mahant. In Nov. 1922, he leased the land and allowed the Akalis to cut wood. Police were withdrawn from the Guru-Ka-Bagh and barbed wire around its enclosures was removed. The Akalis took the possession of the land. The Govt. released the Akali prisoners arrested in connection with this struggle. This suddenly ended the long struggle in which more than 1500 Akalis were injured and 5605 were put behind bars. The Sikhs occupied the Gurdwara and its land on November7,1922. The Mahant was ousted.

Conclusion

Finally government had opened a new 'front' at Guru-Ka-Bagh to regain the loss of prestige it had lost in the agitation over the'Keys Affairs' and wanted to deliver a severe blow to the Akali organization, but received a set-back. The Sikhs remained peaceful despite the rude and cruel behavior of the police. They had exhibited that Sikhs could also remain peaceful and non-violent against provocation and cruelty.

Let us recall our Golden Heritage:

My casual survey of the Sikh students in senior classes of high schools and colleges in the Punjab, as well as out of the Punjab, showed me that very small percentage of them know anything about this unique non- violent struggle at Guru- Ka-Bagh. Even in many Gurdwaras this day is not observed. We have forgotten what Guru Amar Das said:

ਬਾਬਾਣੀਆ ਕਹਾਣੀਆ ਪੁਤ ਸਪੁਤ ਕਰੇਨਿ ॥ [SGGS: 951]

Let the stories of our ancestors make us - the present generation - a proud people.

This is the main reason that new generation of Sikhs are drifting away from Sikhism. This prompted me to write the above few lines. I will request all those who read it to share it with other members and particularly the adults of their families, and those who want to learn about other Sikh martyrs are requested to visit my website (sawansinghgogia.com) and read my books Sikh Martyrs Part 1 & Part 2. □

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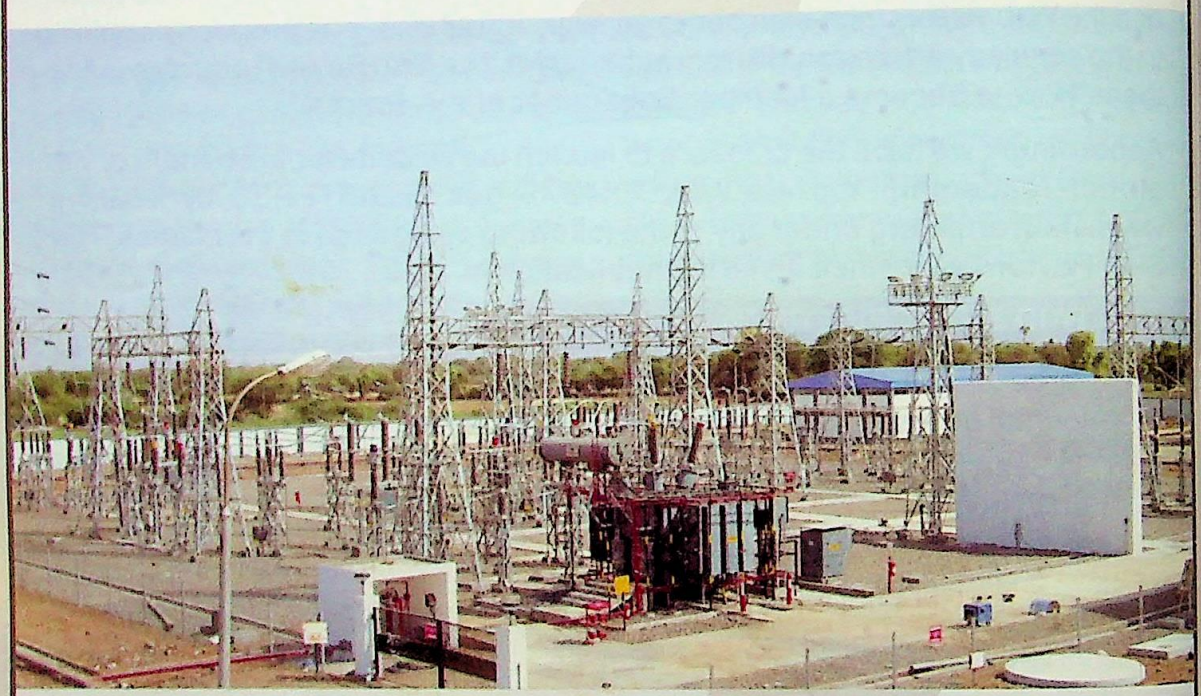
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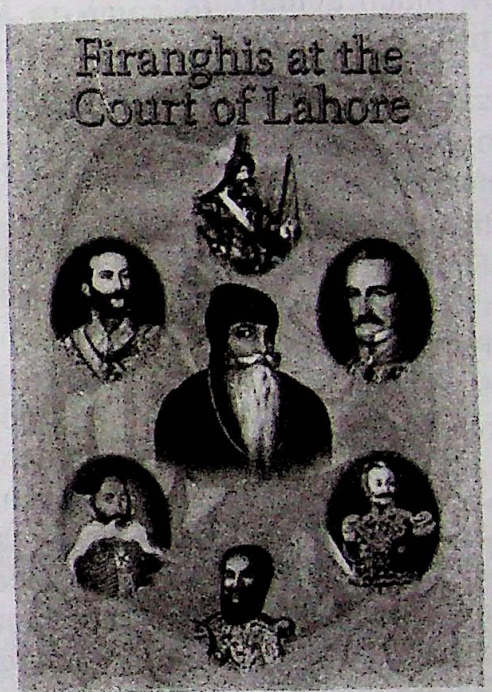
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"The Lion's Firanghis" Europeans in the Court of Sikh Raj

*CONTRIBUTED**

Sr. Bobby Singh Bansal, the Britain based historian, writer and filmmaker, is at the forefront of researching, documenting and presenting on topics revolving around Sikh Heritage and the Sikh Empire of the 1800's. He made his first trip to Pakistan at the ripe age of 18. This was the start of his passion for exploring culture in what is now Pakistan.



Ever since that first encounter Bansal has gone back numerous times over the past 25 years, making new friends and discovering the lost history of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's Empire. However, Bansal discovered that over the years the remains of the Sikh Empire were being neglected and destroyed. Beautiful palaces and magnificent forts were being bulldozed and replaced by shopping malls and housing complexes. Bansal admitted that he was struck by emotions upon seeing the crumbling tomb of Maharaja Sher Singh; and at the moment vowed to take action to preserve these pieces of history.

Thereafter, in collaboration with Fakir Aijazuddin, a descendant of Ranjit Singhs closest aids, Bansal, through his S.K Foundation renovated Sher Singh's tomb. Today, Bansal documents various historical forts and palaces scattered across Pakistan and is continuing his efforts to renovate the historical buildings that once stood valiantly during the Sikh Empire.

Bobby Singh Bansal's talk on **The Lion's Firanghis – Europeans in the Court of Lahore** held at Stanford University was a captivating lecture on the major role the Europeans played in developing and modernizing the Sikh Empire and Army.

*Courtesy: The Sikh Foundation International [Received from Sr. Santokh Singh Bains, USA]

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The talk provided in depth analysis of the high ranking European generals in Ranjit Singh's court – including the close relationship Ranjit Singh had with General Allard, and the modernization General Court brought to the Sikh Army. Bansal stated that among the Sikh community, there is general knowledge that Europeans were a part of Ranjit Singh's court, however, there is very little known about how much actual influence the Europeans had.

According to Bansal, it has been written that Ranjit Singh trusted his Europeans Generals more than his native generals. The level of trust and loyalty between Ranjit and his Firanghis is best illustrated by the story of his Chief Physician, Johann Martin Honigberger, who despite leaving Lahore to settle back in Europe, made a hasty return to Lahore upon hearing that his Maharaja was severely ill.

In the 1800's the Indian subcontinent, with the exception of Punjab, was primarily ruled by the British. Bansal explained that it was with the help of the Europeans, along with the signing of various treaties, which kept the British east of the Sutlej and started the Sikh Empires expansion west ward. In the Empire's prime, its borders stretched from the Sutlej in the east, encompassing all of modern day Pakistan with the exception of Sindh, to Kashmir in the North and Peshawar in the Northwest. The expansion of the empire had a great deal to do with the Europeans modernizing the function of the Sikh army. Their cannons, which were redesigned by General Court, surpassed British cannons which at the time where considered to be more advanced and superior to all others in the region.

So what attracted these Europeans to come to Punjab? Many of the first generals to come to Maharaja's court were Frenchmen. With the fall of Napoleon and France, many of the French generals were unemployed. But stories of Maharaja Ranjit Singh had reached Europe and caught the attention of these general, thus beginning their journey to the east. Maharaja Ranjit Singh welcomed many of the Europeans with open arms and with high ranking positions in his army, which was not taken lightly by the bordering British. The arrival of the Europeans in Punjab worried the British so much that they began arresting any European attempting to travel to Punjab. The acceptance of these Firanghis in the Sikh Court threatened the British hold on land bordering Punjab and the newly revitalized Sikh Army was perceived as a challenger to British hegemony in the subcontinent.

During the time European generals commanded various regiments within the army, the Sikh Empire rapidly expanded toward the west, causing fear among the Afghan leadership in Kabul. However, the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1839

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never allowed for a Sikh army captained by Europeans to face off against the British or Afghans. The death of the Maharaja had plunged the empire into anarchy, and by the time of the first Anglo-Sikh war, nearly all the European generals had abandoned the Empire and returned to Europe.

Based on Sr. Bansal's extensive research, the Europeans in the Court of Lahore played a major role in the development and growth of the Sikh Empire. Sr. Bansal's lecture on Maharajas Ranjit Singh's Firanghis gives us an insight on just how much influence Europeans like Allard and Ventura had on the Maharaja. Today, the legacy'of the Firanghis lives on through the descendants of the Europeans that served in Ranjit Singhs court living across the world.

Thanks to Bobby Bansal's hard work and passion, he has been able to track down these descendants and established life long relationship with the families. He has had the privilege of viewing family heirlooms that were given to their ancestors by Maharaja Ranjit Singh himself. In addition, the information he has gained through the numerous conversations with the descendants has helped evolve and continue his research. The heirs of Europeans, like Allard, Court, and Van Courtlant have left legacies to the future generations. aided Bansal in removing the mystery surrounding these men and their roles in Maharaja Ranjit Singh court. Bansal states that these families are proud of the roles their ancestors played in the Sikh Empire and hope to continue to pass on their stories and legacies to the future generations. ❑

Free Matrimonial Advertisement

In view of the global readership "The Sikh Review" is going to publish Matrimonial Column in their up-coming editions to extend co-operation to Gursikh families - living across the world – In search for a suitable Gursikh Match for their grown up children.

Interested parents can send their brief matter to us, preferably by email.

– Publisher

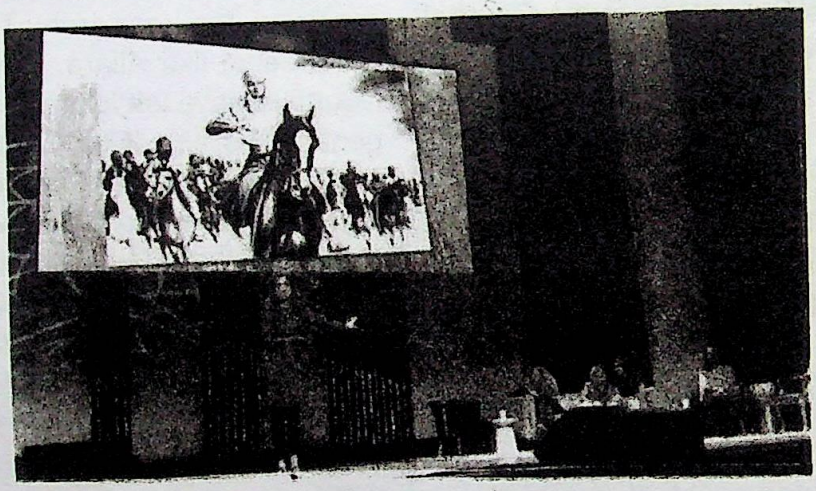
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Valarie Kaur Tours USA Fighting Hate With Love

*CONTRIBUTED**

As hate crimes, violent rhetoric and polarizing politics threaten to undermine social harmony in the United States, it is easy to feel hopeless, despondent and helpless. A few months ago, activist Valarie Kaur felt the same way. "Every night, when I lay my son in his crib, my love for him swells up in my heart – and then fear lodges in my throat when I think about him coming of age," she said. "It feels like fear and hate threatens to swallow America whole." But Valarie quickly turned her fear into action and set off on a mission to give her son a better world. "After 15 years as an activist, I'm tired of fighting in reaction to the latest tragedy. I want solutions rooted in love," she said.



So earlier this year, Valarie left her job at Stanford Law School, bundled up her son, and traveled across the country to listen and learn from other activists. "I discovered I was not alone," she said. "People everywhere want to know: How can we make love a public ethic in American life?"

This journey led Valarie to create The Revolutionary Love™ Project – an initiative that harnesses the ethic of love to drive action in personal lives and in politics. Along the way, she met Glennon Doyle Melton, an author and activist who invited Valarie Kaur to join her on The Together Tour to share the idea of revolutionary love. Since September 28, Valarie Kaur, Glennon, Seane Corn, Rev. Jacqui Lewis, and other special guests have joined together for the six-city Together Tour.

"The Together Community is dedicated to helping each of us identify our unique purpose and turn that purpose into action," reads their website. "Together, we're opening

**Courtesy:* *kaurlife.org*

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our hearts and minds, elevating the people, and things we care about and igniting the change we want to see in the world."

The Together Tour events are about celebrating hope, finding purpose and healing. "Each night we weave a tapestry of stories together on stage – stories of courage, forgiveness, and revolutionary love," said Valarie.

Valarie Kaur and the crew have visited Portland, Los Angles, Chicago, Brooklyn, Atlanta and Denver.

While Valarie is sharing Sikh values and The Revolutionary Love™ Project , she has learned a lot herself while on the tour. "In the midst of deafening hate, bigotry, and misogyny, the women in this tour have been my lifeline," she said. "Their stories inspire me, and their sisterhood gives me strength."

It is a powerful event, Valarie explained, where many audience members are moved to tears and their response, in turn, moves those on stage. "During intermissions, women line up to tell me their own stories and are inspired by the Sikh faith's call to love and relentless optimism," she said. "I believe that people are looking for an antidote strong enough to counter the rising hate in our nation.

Valarie Kaur's activism and her message of revolutionary love is rooted in Sikhi. "Each night, I open the show with a multimedia story of the Sikhs [covering] Guru Nanak, Mai Bhago, all the way to Balbir Singh Sodhi, Lt. Brian Murphy, my mother, and RanaSodhi," said Valarie. Ultimately, she draws inspiration from Guru Nanak's love for all of humanity and looks to his example as a way to respond to the hate of today.

The fight to establish a world based on love where everyone can thrive, as the Guru envisioned, is a noble battle. While it is a never ending one, Valarie has been in more chardikala recently. ❑

CORRIGENDUM

In the page no. 17 of TSR – November 2016 issue, under para 2.7, the name of the ninth guru has been wrongly mentioned as 'Guru Hargobind' instead of "Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib"

Typo error is sincerely regretted.

– Ed - SR

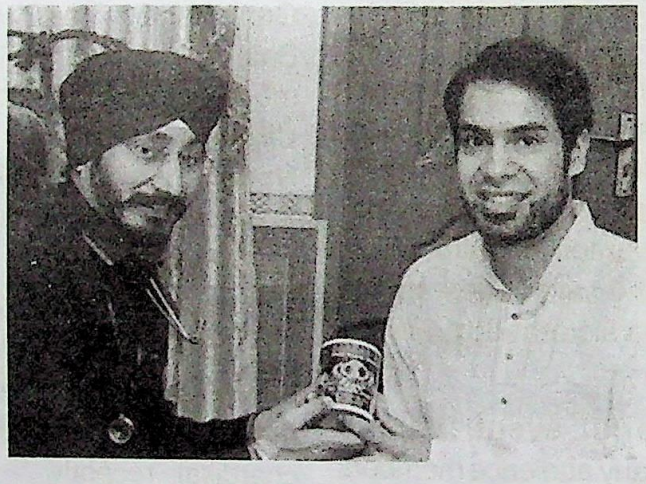
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An Interview with Dr. Mimpal Singh:
The First Sikh MBBS Doctor in Pakistan

*Farhan Wilayat Butt**

In the recent past, I met a great personality who is one of the brightest examples of religious diversity in Pakistan with perfect harmony. We believe that not only his relevant religious community should have lots of proud on him but it is our strongest belief that entire Pakistani nation should be proud of him. He is Dr. Mimpal Singh, who is the first ever Sikh MBBS doctor in the history of Pakistan. Holding the degrees of MBBS, RMP, DCH, MCPS, MD and PGD Nutrication, Dr. Mimpal Singh is working as Consultant Pediatricians & Neonatologist (Child Specialist) and Registrar Peads Medical Ward at Mayo Hospital in Lahore. He is also running his private clinic (Sardar Ji Child Health Clinic) in the vicinity of Shad Bagh, Lahore. Due to shortage of sufficient time, we asked a few questions associated to his personal and professional life.



Question 1. It has been observed that the general public of Pakistan (the one in majority) has a special kind of comfort level with Sikh community; though, a number of communities associated with different sects and religions are residing in Pakistan but generally, people do not share such comfort level with them. Are you also agree with the fact that such comfort level helped you establishing yourself and building your career?

Answer. You are quite right. You won't believe that we (Sikhs) are being loved by the public of Pakistan more than anyone else. When I was in university and was doing MBBS degree, I was the only Sikh student in the class... and even in the university. In majority of Muslim students, I was the one who was most favourite to all teachers and

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being a prominent and hardworking student, I was selected as a 'class representative' (which was certainly an honour for me). When I joined Mayo Hospital in Lahore, I was the only Sikh doctor in entire hospital but still I got so much attention and popularity. And finally, when I started my own clinic, I achieved the trust and confidence of local residents in a very short time. I believe it was the special blessing of almighty Allah, who supported me in every field of life. As far as myself is concerned, I am proud of my nationality. I am a proud Pakistani and I believe that everything I achieved in my life was only because of my beloved Pakistan. Of course, I could never get all those distinctions in case I could be an Indian. I certainly have so many opportunities to work abroad, but it is my love and affection towards my Pakistan that I can never even think about leaving Pakistan only to earn more money. It was only my Pakistan because of which I am standing on such strongest footing today. And let me also share a fact about my family's understanding towards my profession; they never pray Allah for any kind of increase in my business. They only pray for more Shifa and good health for my patients.

Question 2. During last few years, we have noticed Sikh youth achieving brilliant milestones. You made a history and became the 1st Sikh MBBS doctor of Pakistan. Capt. Harcharan Singh joined Pakistan Army. Gulab Singh became a traffic warden. Maninder Singh became a banker. Many Sikh youngsters are doing MBA degrees and many Sikhs are joining police department. What is your message to the Sikh youth of Pakistan?

Answer. All those trend-setters from Sikh youth are achieving such milestones only because of higher education. If you review your own question, you will surely realize that all those prominent Sikhs got popularity in the sectors of medical science, army, police department and banking only due to good education. Though, Pakistan has a big number of rich and wealthy Sikh families but not even a single Sikh from those families is popular due to his wealth. Education is a real jewel and wealth that can never be stolen. It polishes your skills and develops your character. I therefore convey my message to entire Sikh nation to educate their children. Secondly, I request entire Sikh youth to work more efficiently and gently in order to represent their nation as the best one because Sikhs working in all those sectors (medical, trade, police, army and politics etc.) are actually the ambassadors of their Sikh nation.

Question 3. What is your message to entire Pakistani nation?

Answer. I have a sincere advice to all Pakistanis, to understand and realize your individual responsibilities. We have an ancient habit to blame our government and our politicians but before blaming anyone else, we should have to realize the fact that what we actually have given to our country. Secondly, I also request all my Pakistani

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brothers and sisters to educate their children which is really mandatory for complete awareness in our society and I believe that 75% of our problems can be resolved with this single step. Further, I have a request to the millions of Pakistani Muslims to help the poor and needy people through Zakat (which is one of the most prime duties of every Muslim as per the teachings of your religion, Islam). Believe me, by proper payment and distribution of Zakat, the problem of poverty will be vanished within a short span of time and it will certainly decrease many other crimes in our society which are basically produced due to poverty. I am not talking about Khairat, Sadqa or any other modes of charities. I am specifically talking about Zakat only which is mandatory to pay.

Dr. Mimpal Singh also disclosed many facts about his services for social welfare and we really wanted to share all those things right here but upon special request of Dr. Mimpal, we are not adding those details in this short interview because he doesn't want to disclose all those facts for any kind of publicity or advertising. We believe that it is another aspect of the greatness of his personality that he keeps his name hidden in all those welfare activities. We also observed another beautiful thing while reading the letter heads of Dr. Mimpal Singh... the name of Allah and Howashafi was mentioned on the top of the letter heads. Dr. Mimpal Singh told me that while writing any prescription I just watch the name of Allah and I believe that all the Shifa in the medicines I suggest are then granted by almighty Allah and my patients never submit any complaint.

It was one of the best discussion-sessions arranged by our Pakistan Peacekeeping Mission as there were no unanswered questions, doubts, or confusions. We believe that our society really needs such courteous and kind people. At the end of our meeting, Dr. Mimpal Singh shared the mementos which will certainly remind us our great discussion and the most pleasant visit to 'Sardar Ji Child Health Clinic'. We thank Dr. Mimpal Singh for his kind hospitality, as well as, for the most friendly and beautiful discussion. Also special thanks to Shazi Ahmed Photography for detailed coverage of entire meeting and discussion session.

Few Words About Pakistan Peace-keeping Mission:

Pakistan Peacekeeping Mission has been formed to make peace, unity and brotherhood among all Pakistanis, regardless of any differences of their religions, castes, colours and ethnic origins. No matter what is your regional identity (Punjabi, Saraiki, Kashmiri, Sindhi, Pashtun, Hazara, Baloch etc.)... No matter what are your religious beliefs (whether you are Muslim, Christian, Parsi, Sikh, Hindu etc.); no matter what is your colour/ caste... The main fact behind all those differences is... You are a Proud & Peaceful Pakistani and we all Pakistanis have to get united for a peaceful environment in our Pakistan. □

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Raja Rattan Rai

(From 'Sri Guru Kalgidhar Chamatkar' by Bhai Saheb Bhai Vir Singh ji)

Translated by Bimal Kaur

*Chapter IV**

Finally, the day dawned, when they were to depart for Anandpur. The Raja had ordered a comfortable palanquin for his mother and another for her maids. All the gifts were safely packed in strong wooden boxes and loaded on horses. He himself along with his close companions, the Chief Minister and a number of soldiers to provide security on the way,rode on horse-back.

The Raja had planned the route well. Whenever they came to a village where Sikhs lived and there was a Gurdwara, the party would stay for a couple of days and hear about the experiences of the Sikhs,who had personally had Guru ji's 'darshan' and received His blessings. They would visit the Gurdwara and offer 'Parshad' and stay to listen to the 'Kirtan' and Gurbani recitation.

Soon they reached Patna Sahib, where Guru Gobind Singh ji was born and had spent His childhood years. They went to the Gurdwara, bowed in veneration and applied the dust on their foreheads. The 'Sangat' collected and warmly welcomed the Raja and his party. After the evening 'satsang', the Sikhs narrated Guru Gobind Singh ji's childhood activities, to which the Raja listened with rapt attention. He was over-whelmed to meet the people, who had met Guru ji and been blessed by Him. Listening to their experiences increased the love for Guru ji in the Raja's heart and he spent ten days there. He visited the banks of the Ganga river and bathed in the same waters in which Guru ji used to frolic with his group of young friends. He even saw the earthen pitchers pierced by Guru ji's arrows, which had been kept very carefully. Before leaving, he gave a substantial sum for the renovation of the building in which Guru ji was born.

Continuing their journey at a good speed, the cavalcade reached the river Satluj. As they neared Anandpur, they saw lush, green land with numerous shady trees. Selecting a beautiful spot, the Raja gave orders to make camp. Large tents were erected and soon everyone was comfortably settled.

Meanwhile news reached Guru ji that the Sikh Raja of Assam had arrived. He sent messengers with the orders, "The Raja is our guest and proper arrangements must be made for his stay. Food and water for him and the people accompanying him and everything else necessary for their comfort must be made available. For the horses, elephants and other animals, fresh grass, hay and oats and water must be sent to the camp at the earliest."

Mama Kirpal Chand ji, who was Guru ji's maternal uncle, went and welcomed the

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Raja,his mother and the other members of his party. He personally supervised all the arrangements for their stay and explained Guru ji's daily routine.

The Raja and his companions were very pleased with the warm welcome they received. The night was spent to ease the fatigue of the long journey. Early next morning, the Raja's Diwan Sahib went to meet Mama ji to request for an appropriate time to come for Guru ji's 'darshan'.

Meanwhile, the Raja's mother, Rani Swaranmati, called him to sit with her. Taking his hand in hers, she spoke softly, "My son, you have brought some exquisite gifts for Guru ji, but remember that whatever we have is His; nothing belongs to us. We have to offer these gifts joyously, with the hope that Guru ji will accept them and be pleased with our humble devotion. The enthusiasm, love and reverence that you are feeling are by His grace. Hold these blessings close to your heart and let no other feelings ever replace them."

The Raja sat with head bowed, listening to his mother with concentration. Then, he uttered just one word, "Ardas". Immediately his mother stood up, folded her hands and with eyes closed, she began to pray, "O Master of all creation, Waheguru, we do not have the refinement to be able to perceive your presence. We are crude, worldly people and can only pray for your grace. Earlier you had appeared in the form which we could see and gave us thrilling glimpses of a world we could not fully comprehend. Since that time we have lived with your memory and pined for your 'darshan' as our Guru. And now, with your benevolence, you have given us the opportunity once again, to satisfy these yearning eyes. Bless us that we see you and absorb the image for all time in our hearts. Let there be only you and nobody else.

"I am grateful that the son you sent with your blessings, has come to love and revere you. May he hold this love in his heart for all time to come. Bless him so that he clings to you as a child clings to his mother, never to forget you, ever! We are weak and get distracted by the world and can only beseech you to hold us close so that we stay on the right path, our faces directed only towards you. We have come to your door-step with the complete belief that our weaknesses will be forgiven and that You will be always there to show us the right path. Bless us!"

They stood, lost in the fervor of the prayer, their faces awash with tears. Finally, they opened their eyes which were shining with deep gratitude. The Raja turned to place his forehead at his mother's feet. His heart was filled with love and gratitude, for it was due to her efforts and loving guidance that he was walking on the path of 'dharam'. But his mother caught him by the shoulders and said, "No, my son. This forehead is going to touch Guru ji's lotus feet and must not touch anyone else's feet."

Guru ji's messenger came then, to inform them to come to the Diwan as Guru ji was already there. □

[End of Chapter IV
(To be continued)

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The Budding Artist We should Know!

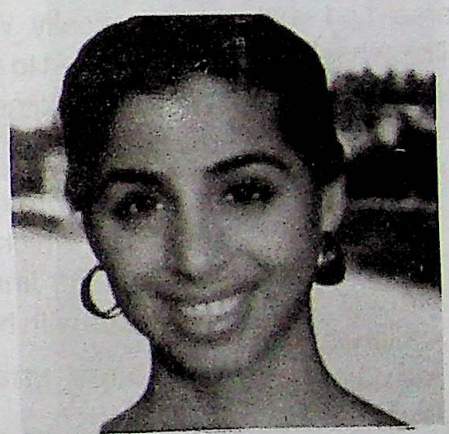
*CONTRIBUTED**

You might own her artwork and not even know it.

You might have seen her artwork at conferences, and not even realized it.

You might have viewed her artwork online, and not known who it was by.

The artist you've been admiring is, Rupy Kaur.



Rupy Kaur is a self-taught artist, and her artwork has graced the cover of"Her name is Kaur," been an emblem of Sikh Love Stories, and branded SAFAR conference materials. She has also done design work for several Sikh youth conferences for the last five years. Her artwork is detailed, ethnic, bright and colorful: a tribute to her Punjabi roots and heritage.

"Having a multicultural upbringing [Punjabi and American] I focus on things or objects that identify us as people," Rupy explained. She referenced a 'phulkari' chuni as an example. "I analyze the significance it carries for me as a Punjabi and as an American. Is there duality or a clash? How does it define me?" Further drawing on her culture, Rupy draws inspiration from Indian and Persian miniatures. "I gravitate towards the colorful, decorative nature of traditional art along with the devotion and time that goes into creating it." But every day is different for Rupy. "It's healthy to engage with different styles. It's fun, fresh, and engaging."

Rupy has been creating art ever since she was young. "In elementary school, art was a part of the daily curriculum. I thought of it as an 'easy' class but ironically I would work the hardest in that class all the way through high school. My art teachers said I would be great but they never pushed me to think of it as a career." But after high school, Rupy's career path deviated from art.

"I went the more 'traditional' route and got a Master's in Public Health after studying biology in undergrad. I found it to be an easier path to follow; it's what I was exposed to

*Source: Sikhnet.com
[Check out Rupy's Art: www.instagram.com/artbyrupy; www.facebook.com/RupyCheemaTut; http://www.artbyrupy.com/]

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growing up." Rupy went on to work for a non-profit for three years and served as a global health instructor as well. Though she enjoyed it, she felt like she was not meeting her potential. After moving to the Bay Area, Rupy decided she would try making art a full time endeavor. "Fortunately it worked out! I've been a professional artist for four years now!"

"Being a full time artist has been the scariest thing ever, and the most rewarding thing too!" Rupy said she had to undo everything she knew about herself and what she wanted her life to look like when she stepped onto the art path. She developed patience, self-discipline, and self-confidence for a career that was completely unfamiliar to her.

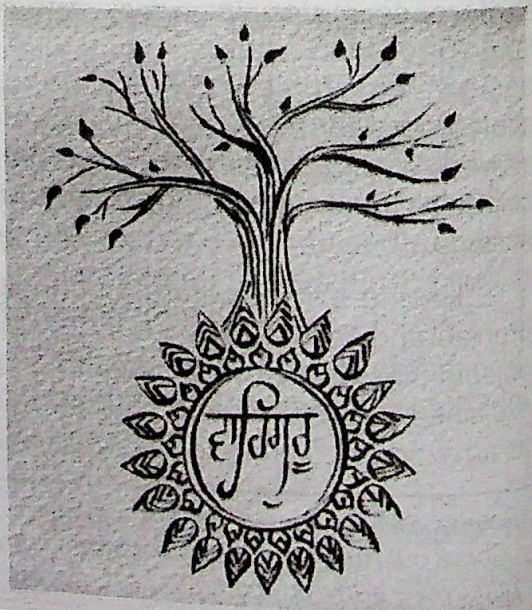
Rupy had her first public showing as a professional artist at theSikhlens Film Festival in 2011. "The festival audience was very encouraging and all of my paintings were appreciated and purchased," she said. Rupy continues to show at Sikh events and values the feedback from her Sikh community, as it is a group very dear and close to her. She also shows in retail shows and group shows with other artists.

Creating art brings with it an element of constant self-reflection for Rupy. "My work is a reflection of who I am," said. Questions such as: "What can I do differently? What can I do better? What do I want to communicate? What do I want the audience to comment on or notice?" fill Rupy's mind on a daily basis. "I embody the answers to these questions in a piece of work for the world to see. I would have never thought that I would have the confidence or self assurance to say 'This is what I disagree with' or 'This is who I want to be,' through my paintings."

In addition to her family and loved ones, Rupy feels that her Sikhi is instrumental in keeping her afloat as an artist. "To say that Sikhi inspires my art is an understatement. So much of Sikhi is already embodied in who I am; it is not separate, it is a part of who I am so, my work reflects it automatically. When I have self-doubt, I always resort to a bigger power than myself, Waheguru. Nitnem keeps me going too, it's my medicine for tough times."

Sikhi provides the guidelines and values by which Rupy lives, creates, and works. One line in gurbani particularly resonates with her.

ਫਰੀਦਾ ਖਾਲਕੁ ਖਲਕ ਮਹਿ ਖਲਕ ਵਸੈ ਰਬ ਮਾਹਿ ॥



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Fareed, the Creator is in the Creation, and the Creation abides in God. [SGGS: 1381]

"This is applicable to me in the way I create my work," said Rupy. "I don't think I'm creating it but I feel like something flows through me; it comes from the divine. I am a part of creation so I can't call myself a creator. I am one who precepts. For me, art is essentially a form of prayer to the Creator who has given me my abilities."



Finding self-worth and value in life beyond money is something that Sikhi teaches and Rupy finds that it is a lesson re-enforced through art. "It's a struggle to think of art as a business while making art that is true to myself as an artist. As a result, I have had to define success for myself beyond commissions and sales." For Rupy, success is when she produces what she wants to produce. "To have my work in places where people look at it and are affected by it, that is success for me. Success is if they feel happy or remember something beautiful in life, or a memory is rekindled. I want my audience to be able to connect with me through my work."

In the future, Rupy hopes to explore, through art, the identity of people as reflected by the objects that define each person physically. In addition, Rupy wants to depict the identity of women and the roles that define a contemporary Punjabi woman. "I decided a long time ago that I want to dissect the identity of who a woman is and work on my own career being a woman through the process. I don't want to forget how important we are and what impact we can have in the world."

Rupy's future repertoire is full of interesting topics: Skin color, race & the media, duality in identity, and gurbani. But ultimately, Rupy wants to continue to be excited to create and work on different types of art everyday. "I get bored easily and as an artist, it's very important to find meaning and value in what I do." She also hopes to reach out to other Sikh artists for collaboration pieces.

Rupy feels that the Punjabi community doesn't support people to pursue art and she sees so much lost potential. "I want to break down the fear around art as a career." So, if there's one thing Rupy wants to be known for, it is encouraging everyone to create art and value the creative process and space. "It's not hard to be creative. It is not something that only 'gifted' people should do. Being creative is in our nature. If you enjoy it and want to work very very very hard, then pursue it! Make it a career." ❑

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Pakistan's first Sikh Cricketer Mahinder Pal Singh

*CONTRIBUTED**

For years Pakistan has been missing out on regular international cricketing events on home soil; it is often served up as the prime reason why Pakistani cricket has been facing a dearth of new talent in the squad. Despite all the negativity, differences and squab-bles with rival boards and politics at home, the game has not lost its allure and Pakistan's heart continues to beat for cricket.



Over the years the Pakistan squad has seen Christians and Hindus represent the country at home and abroad. For the first time, a Pakistani Sikh has proven his mettle and has secured a place at the National Cricket Academy; that man is Mahinder Pal Singh.

Mahinder Singh hails from Nankana Sahib and says that he is proud to be able to represent the entire Pakistani Sikh community and is proud to have secured a place at the Pakistani Cricket Academy.

In a video circulating on social media Mahinder expressed his desire to make Pakistan proud and thanked his coach and the chairman of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) for having faith in him and recognizing his talent.

Mahinder Pal Singh is among the list of top 30 emerging cricketers in the country. Pakistan's cricketing history has only seen 7 non-Muslim cricketers representing the country, Mahinder Pal Singh may join the list as the eighth non-Muslim and first Pakistani Sikh to represent Pakistan. □

Received from Sr. Santokh Singh Bains

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Mysterious Are the Ways of God

*Principal S. S. Prince**

Let us step out of our comfort zone,
And make giving a part of our lives,
Loving, caring, empathy and compassion,
Are factors on which humanity thrives,
How lovely is the tiny bird dove,
Yet it is a symbol of peace and love.

First of all God created light,
All humans owe their existence to Nature,
Caste, colour, customs and creed may differ,
But all creatures are equal in stature,
Dark nights are followed by days,
Amazingly mysterious are God's ways.

Look at the rich who yearn for more,
Without limit is their sense of greed,
For pelf they have unquenchable thirst,
This practice robs them of their sleep,
Harvest of sorrows they are bound to reap.

But those who always meditate God's name,
Remain unperturbed in pleasure or pain,
They selflessly perform the noble acts,
Unmindful of any loss or gain,
They are the ones who always shine,
The every whistle and never whine.

The sun is one but seasons many,
God manifests Himself in many forms,
Green grass glittering with drops of dew,
Provides to eyes some enviable charms,
All evil thoughts we should keep at bay,
For welfare of mankind we should pray.

* *Email : ssprince1312@rediffmail.com*

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Women as Priests in Gurdwaras?

Dear Dr. Inderjit Singh Ji
TSR Editor (Overseas),

Many thanks for your Editorial published at pages 6 to 8 of The Sikh Review, December 2016 on the subject matter mentioned above.

What an odd similarity?

The followers of Christian religion under Catholic segment the Pope, Cardinals and other Priests remain celibate. While considering, Panel may also study as to whether married persons could also perform that responsibility. I know that Associate-Nuns of Late Mother Teresa also do not marry and uphold "celibacy".

Similar 'odd' situation prevails in respect of Head priest of Hazur Sahib at Nanded who also remains celibate, and even does not move out of that place. Such a negative practice needs to be dispensed with. But it seems that SGPC and its Head Granthis are more interested to follow Brahminical, Christian / Buddhism rites.

It is not clear why the Sikhs in Punjab and other Indian States, have become so weak that they are unable to point out such outdated practices? Please keep us awakened and alert as disciplined Khalsa.

Gurmit Singh (Sydney)

Email: Gurmit Singh01@bigpond.com

★★★★★★

IN SERCH OF RELEVANT INFORMATION ABOUT SIKHS IN CONTINENTAL "EUROPE"

SWARN SINGH KAHLON of Chandigarh has rendered great service to Sikhs all over the world by writing two unique books titled SIKHS IN LATIN AMERICA and SIKHS IN ASIA PACIFIC.

Now he is gathering relevant information for his third book titled SIKHS IN CONTINENTAL EUROPE. For this book, he needs information about Sikhs in RUSSIA, POLAND, GREECE, ITALY, SPAIN, PORTUGAL, FRANCE, BELGIUM, NETHERLANDS, GERMANY, AUSTRIA, SWITZERLAND, DENMARK, FINLAND, SWEDEN, NORWAY and ICELAND.

If any reader of THE SIKH REVIEW has any information about Sikhs in the above-mentioned European countries, then he/she should kindly contact the author at his following address:

505 SECTOR 18 B, CHANDIGARH - 160018, INDIA
Email: swarnsk@gmail.com • Phone (Mobile): 981-5517-100

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Air Marshal Birender Singh Dhanoa takes charge as IAF Chief



Air Marshal Birender Singh Dhanoa has taken over as the Chief of the Indian Air Force after Former Air Chief Marshal Arup Raha retired from post.

The new Air Chief Marshal B. S. Dhanoa developed the country's aerial targeting philosophy against potential adversaries and transformed the concepts of air operations of the Indian Air Force to contemporary war fighting practices.

The IAF in a statement said he has mainly flown the Kiran and MiG-21 aircraft and has flying experience across the entire spectrum of fighter aircraft from the Jaguar to the state-of-the-art MiG-29 and Su-30 MKI.

The IAF statement said the officer has an immaculate record of flight safety throughout his distinguished career as a field commander.

Dhanoa, who is the 25th chief of the IAF since Independence, was commissioned in the IAF in June 1978 as a fighter pilot

The Air Chief Marshal has many feathers in his hat. As Commanding Officer of a front line ground attack fighter squadron, he led the IAF punch during the "Limited War" against Pakistan to evict the enemy from their "dug in" defences in the icy heights of Kargil region.

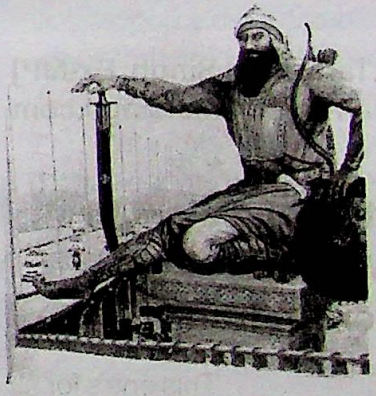
During the conflict, under his leadership and supervision, the squadron devised unique and innovative methods of bombing in the night at altitudes never before attempted in the history of air warfare, the IAF said.

Birender Singh Dhanoa also holds the highest flying instructional category in the IAF and was handpicked to establish the 'IAF Training Team' abroad.

[Courtesy: Times Now, Agencies]

★★★★★★

Statue of Baba Banda Singh Bahadur: A much belated initiative!



Sikhs should rejoice that a full size statue of First Sikh ruler Baba Banda Singh Bahadur (1709-1716) was installed at a busy road near Mandi House in New Delhi. He defeated Mughal Army and established the first Khalsa Raj. I may add that I got Master Tara Singh's Statue installed near Parliament. when I was the Chairman of National Commission for Minorities, We succeeded in installing huge statue of Maharaja Ranjit Singh on horse back in Parliament of India. Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee the then Prime Minister of India unveiled the Statue.

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In 2008 my proposal to have a bust of Shaheed Bhagat Singh in Parliament was approved. Though we are not idol worshipers but in modern era every nation promote their heroes. Statues of Shivaji and Maharana Partap are visible in every City. I remember few years ago a bust of S.Dalip Singh Saund, first Indian and a Sikh to become a member of American Parliament was installed in American council. I have seen a beautiful statue of Maharaja Dalip Singh in Thetford in U.K. I have been pleading that Sikhs in England should have a live monument of Saragarhi Battle of 1896 which is a pride of Sikh Soldiers. Recently a Sikh Soldier of First World War was installed in Lester in U.K. We should pay more attention to setting up of Sikh Museums.

[S.Tarlochan Singh, Ex-MP]
Email: tarlochan@tarlochansingh.com

★★★★★★

The Sultan of Selangor (Malaysia) Honours Sikh Leader Sr. Harjit Singh



This one's for all Sikhs, says news-caster of 'Datukship' FMT Repor-ters I December 12, 2016

Veteran news-caster Harjit Singh Hullon is bestowed the 'Datuk-ship' in conjunction with the Sultan of Selangor's birthday.

PETALING JAYA: RTM newscaster Harjit Singh Hullon has dedicated the "Datuk" title he received from the Sultan of Selangor to all the Sikhs he knows.

Speaking on the telephone to Asia Samachar, an online newspaper for Sikhs in the region, Harjit said, "This is one for all Sikhs, not me alone. I'm the face and the voice of the Sikhs."

Harjit is a familiar face for most Malaysians who watch the prime time news on telly.

Calling it "yet another feather in the cap for Sikhs", Harjit, 63, was bestowed the title Datuk Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah (DSIS) on the occasion of the Sultan of Selangor's 71st birthday.

Despite retiring five years ago as the principal assistant director of TV news, Harjit still goes on the air like clockwork at RTM, something he has been doing for the past 43 years and counting.

"I will be calling it a day next year," he said however, after having successfully made it into the Malaysia Book of Records in 2011 as the longest serving newscaster. Way to go, Harjit!

Harjit joined RTM as a radio deejay in 1972 and found his true calling as a newscaster the next year when he started reading news on television.

"Ever since the first time I tuned in to the radio, I knew I wanted my voice to be heard too," he was reported to have said in an interview all those years ago.

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Harjit is well known for his flawless diction of both spoken Malay and English, and for being the only Sikh newscaster at RTM.

Joking to the media about his fame, Harjit good-naturedly related how he was known among his friends as RTM, and no, it did not mean Radio Television Malaysia, the station he worked for but "Regular Turbanned Man".

Harjit was one of the 101 people who received various titles and awards from Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah of Selangor at his birthday investiture ceremony at the Istana Alam Shah.

[Courtesy: freemalaysiatoday.com]

★★★★★★

New NYPD Turban and Beard Rule Opens Employement Opportunities for Sikhs



NEW YORK: On Wednesday, December 28, 2016, the New York City Police Department Commissioner, James O'Neill, announced that in order to continue to make the NYPD as diverse as possible, NYPD would allow Sikhs to wear beards. The new rule would also allow Sikhs to serve with turbans that have a police badge affixed to it. This rule could open doors to Sikh men and women who have until now struggled between the choice to serve their City or their faith. Although welcomed as a step closer to acceptance of Sikh religious rights by the NYPD, there are mixed reviews about the restrictions on beard length because in Sikhism, requiring a Sikh to cut or trim the hair is considered a serious infringement on his or her religious rights.

Gurvinder Singh, President of the Sikh Officers Association, in a message to UNITED SIKHS, said, "This is a great moment when Police Commissioner announced that NYPD will allow SIkh Officers to keep their turbans and to keep their beards. Now Sikhs can serve in the largest police department, in the most diverse city in the world, proudly wearing their turbans and beards, in keeping with their faith".

With this policy, New York City joins police departments in other cities in the U.S, U.K., Canada, India, Australia and elsewhere who have recognized the brave contributions Sikhs have made over the last one hundred years to preserving democracy. These cities have also recognize a Sikh's potential to greatly contribute to fair and humane community policing in the future.

UNITED SIKHS would like to thank the Mayor Bill de Blasio, the NYPD Commissioner, the Sikh Officers Association and members of Sikh commminty who have worked for this change.

★★★★★★

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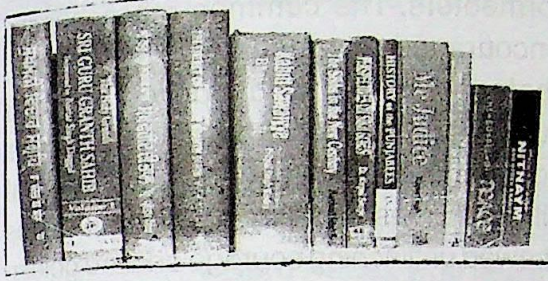
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Book Review

For review in ***The Sikh Review*** writers/publishers need to send two copies

1) Heritage of Sant Sipahis - Ambassadors of Human Rights

2) The Resolute Sikhs - by Rajinder Singh Jolly

Published by Jolly Literature House, 43240, Lighthouse Place, South Riding, Virginia 20152, U.S.A.

Price: Please read and inspire others to read.

A Review By Dr. Harpreet Kaur*

S. Rajinder Singh Jolly, resident of Virginia, USA, is a distinguished writer whose contributions have enriched vast treasure of literature in the contemporary times. His literary journey - as a multilingual writer - is that of equally many splendoured author who is at home with Punjabi, Hindi and English. His books beautifully articulate his insights across various event and historical details - as also his philosophic acumen combined with linguistic proficiency make his books a pleasure to read. He is effortlessly intelligible by the reader of diverse tastes.

His personal library books comprise 11 poetry collections, five literary books and seven books elucidating the life and times of our Great Gurus: Glimpses of Sikh History, Sarbans Dani Guru Gobind Singh Ji, Brahm Gyani Guru Arjun Dev Ji, Soora So Pahchaniye, and Guru Nanak Darshan among others.

The above most recent two books have been written with a broader perspective discussing the lives and times of our Gurus and other biographies. His focus has been the Sikh history, especially the sacrifices made by the Sikh community during the five centuries of Sikh history. Despite the hardship, the Sikhs have their distinctive values: freedom of conscience, the principle of equality -

*Associate Prof. & Head, Department of Politcal Science Sri Guru Gobind Singh College of Commerce, University of Delhi. General Secretary: Punjabi Sahit Kala Sangam

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attributes that have won the Sikh global appreciation and admiration.

The two books stress the vigour and valour of the Sikhs as a community. Both underline the message of justice, sacrifice, selfless work, equality and brotherhood among the people. The books make an engrossing reading. Illustrations by Raj Singh Tattal enhance the literary content by pictorial depiction of events. The books are also a tribute to the sacrifices and the inspiration of saintly personages over the centuries. It is just as well that the Sikh Literature, History and culture continue to inspire these recollections then the community will be oblivious of the great sacrifices borne by our Great Gurus and the tradition of heroism of the community.

The central theme of books has been to bring out unflinching resolve, unbending fortitude, persistent endurance, profound sensitivities and sharp perception of the domineering personalities from the annals of history. These dedicated Sikhs with brave hearts and a firm resolve confronted all sorts of atrocities and torture unwaveringly and even embraced martyrdom but did not succumb to anti-secular and atrocious forces. They stood for righteousness and freedom of conscience and laid grounds for new democratic traditions in an era that was marked by injustice, inequality and unfairness in society as well as polity. The helpless and oppressed saw a new ray of hope to raise their voice against the tormentors. The common masses were encouraged to preserve religious faith, restore justice, end oppression and subjugation and uphold human rights in the society. These brave men and women, at different times and different circumstances showed unflinching courage and are golden examples in the pages of history. The tradition of sacrifice is a significant element that is underlying propelling force behind all deeds and accomplishments of the Sikhs all through the history. These books with a common thread of contemplation have been written with an objective of inter-faith brotherhood and sacrifice. Yet, the achievements of great men and women achievements have not been envisaged in terms of importance that they should have received in the annals of history. The humble contribution of the author emphasizes their contribution.

Heritage of Sant Sipahis (Ambassadors of Human Rights) is dedicated to the 350th Anniversary of Sri Guru Gobind Singh. Our ten Gurus led by example and an extraordinary vision for the humanity. Guru Arjun Dev, Guru Tegh Bahadur, Guru Gobind Singh and sacrifice of the entire family, Banda Singh Bahadur as a Forerunner and Empire builder of the Sikh state and later, of numerous Sikhs who readily sacrificed for the sake of religion are inter-woven into a logical sequence with a pre-dominant continuity that the

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Gurus and Khalsa ardently espoused and defended the philosophy and teachings of Guru Nanak Dev.

The book, **Sant Sipahis** highlights the rich legacy of Sikhism that accords credence to the supreme value to the spirit of sacrifice. The courage to sacrifice was emphasized by Guru Nanak who laid the seeds of Sikhism to blossom and subsequently, the succeeding Gurus cherished it with virtues of valour, endurance and love of God and lived up to the percepts propounded by the First Guru. The book contains life, teachings and legacy of the Gurus and the tradition of sacrifice. The spirit of undaunted valour and supreme sacrifice that the Gurus endorsed also reinvigorated other legendary personalities of later times and even, the common masses to preserve the religious faith, restore justice, end oppression and subjugation and uphold human rights in the society.

Guru Nanak advocated the people to have faith in one God and consider the entire world as the manifestation of his creation. In the Guru's teachings, God occupies the central place and the idea of formless, supreme and absolute power permeates the entire philosophy. The all-embracing faith of people in Akalpurukh enlightens their thoughts, purges from all sinful deeds and guides them to the path of righteousness and spiritualism.

The policies of Aurangzeb were responsible for martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur as his grandfather; Guru Arjun was sacrificed due to Aurangzeb's grandfather, Jahangir. The history was repeated after 68 years with the fervent sacrifices of both the Gurus that infused a new potency and vigour into the Sikhs. The martyrdom of Guru Arjun and then of Guru Tegh Bahadur left no alterative before the Tenth Master, Guru Gobind Singh than to resort to armed struggle to annihilate evil in the social and political framework.

Guru Gobind Singh, before merging his soul into Divine Light conferred Gurugaddi to Sri Guru Granth Sahib. After the declaration of the Guru that he submerged himself within the brotherhood of the Khalsa, the personal Guruship was abolished. The Holy Granth contains Bani of Gurus, Bhagats belonging to varied communities and faiths and includes the Bani of 15 Bhagats, 17 Bhatts and 3 Sevaks of Guru Ghar. The Granth contains hymns of Gurus as well as saints belonging to the so-called lower caste in the Hindu social order, for example, Kabir was a weaver, Ravidas a cobbler, Namdev a calico-printer and Dhanna a Farmer.

The qualities of saint soldiers are epitomized in the creation of Khalsa who are embodied as vanguard of human rights, equality and justice. Guru Gobind Singh in a landmark event created Panj Piaras (Five Beloved Ones) and formed

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Khalsa Panth on the day of Baisakhi in 1699. The beloved five ones belonged to different parts of India and only one beloved belonged to Khatri sect of the society (which is considered martial), while remaining four belonged to various other weaker groups of society. The Sikhs were transformed into Singhs, which abolished all distinction prevalent in the society. These Sant Sipahis were 'Fearless, Brave, Judicious, Righteous, Pious and Truthful', as per the injunctions of Akaalpurkh. The maxim that guided the Khalsa was "Fear no one; Scare no one" and steadfastness to the faith was their creed even in all sorts of adversities. The Khalsa imbibed the qualities of kindness, judiciousness, liveliness, (Charhdi Kala), fearlessness, respect and worthiness.

The author has endeavored to gather maximum information from several sources including, Mahan Kosh on the back-ground of Panj Piaras and the qualities they stand for.

Bhai Daya Ram was the first one to answer the clarion call of the Guru and readily offered his head and laid the foundation of the novel Panth, Khalsa. He carried Zafarnama (Letter of Victory) written by Sri Guru Gobind Singh to Aurangzeb and accompanied Guru Gobind Singh up to Nanded, where he breathed his last.

Bhai Dharam Singh stood after Bhai Daya Singh to offer his head to the Guru. At Anandpur Sahib, after attaining martial art training from Guru Gobind Singh, he joined the army of Dharma. He extended his absolute support to Guru Gobind Singh throughout the period of struggle and breathed his last in the year 1708 at Nanded.

Bhai Himmat Singh, the third blessed one, attained martyrdom while fighting in the battle of Chamkaur in the year 1704.

Bhai Mohkam Singh, fourth pillar of Khalsa exemplify the qualities of firmness and strength in the character of Khalsa. After taking Pahul from Sri Guru Gobind Singh, at Anandpur Sahib leant martial art skill. He obtained martyrdom in Dharam Yudh of Chamkaur alongside Sahibzada Ajit Singh in the year 1704.

Bhai Sahib Singh synonymous with the qualities of a respectable person, who has traditional authority and status, further strengthened the base of Khalsa. After receiving training of martial art at Anandpur Sahib, he served as important pillar of Guru Gobind Singh's army. He fought with extraordinary valour and proficiency in the battle of Bhangani in 1688. In 1704 at Chamkaur fighting the Dharam Yudh, in an unequal battle opposite huge Mughal forces, alongside Sahibzada Jujhar Singh, he attained martyrdom.

Four Sahibzadas of Guru Gobind Singh are unparalleled examples of fearlessness and heroism. Their

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martyrdom will always be adorned in the Sikh history in letters of gold till eternity. Sahibzada Ajit Singh and Sahibzada Jujhar Singh embraced death in fighting the battle at Chamkaur. Two younger Sahibzadas, Sahibzada Jorawar Singh and Sahibzada Faten Singh were bricked alive at Fatehgarh Sahib at the order of Wazir Khan, the Nawab of Sirhind and became the youngest ever martyrs in the annals of history.

Sikh history is replete with instances of such sacrifices and valour and a number of episodes that provided a direction to the Sikh history are carefully included in the book to reiterate their significance to the contemporary generations. The writer has given an insightful view into the lives and sacrifices of Bhai Mani Singh, Bhai Deep Singh, Bhai Taru Singh, Bhai Subeg Singh and Bhai Shahbaz Singh, Bhai Sukha Singh and Bhai Mehtab Singh.

The author also includes references of the social and religious setup of Khalsa. Eleven Misals formed a confederation termed as Dal Khalsa and Jassa Singh Ahluwalia was unanimously chosen as leader of it. The Khalsa has been instrumental in preserving the much-treasured Sikh value system. The Sikh community has encountered innumerable and hostile challenges time and again but has preserved their sacred identity and retained their position. The role of the institution of Panj Piaras has been fundamental and vital in all these compelling trials.

The little known history of Tees Hazari where the camp of 30,000 Sikhs forces under the leadership of S. Baghel Singh was stationed is cited. The Khalsa flag was unfurled at the Red Fort in March 1783. The pre-conditions that were laid by him to vacate the Red Fort had profound religious significance attached to it. The construction of Gurdwara Sis Ganj Sahib, Gurdwara Rakabgunj Sahib, Gurdwara Bangla Sahib, Gurdwara Majnu ka Tila, Gurdwara at Moti Bagh, Gurdwara Nanak Piao and Gurdwara Mata Sundri Ji was the condition of the brave general, Baghel Singh and his Khalsa warriors. This glorious heritage was handed to the posterity as a result of the bravery, fearlessness and their deep connection for the Sikh religion and heritage.

A special section mentioned by the writer contains the contribution of the Sikh resolute women. In the social era, when the position of women was considered derogatory, Guru Nanak elevated the position of women to a respectful place. The Sikh Gurus refuted all gender-based discrimination and the belittling rituals such as, Sati, Purdah etc. were vehemently opposed by them in words and deeds. Bebe Nanaki first acknowledged the divine spark in Guru Nanak, the role of Mata Sulakhani in elevating the spiritual legacy of Guru has been significant.

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The Resolute Sikhs, another book by the author outlines the eternal legacy of the golden history of the Sikh Gurus, their philosophy and ideals of life. The spiritual measures undertaken by the Gurus consolidated the Sikh community that culminated in the creation of Khalsa by the Tenth Master and gradually, a peaceful Sikh social order matured. Guru Hargobind Singh girded himself with the twin swords of Miri and Piri, for peaceful means had become obsolete and to fight successful battles against the atrocities of the Mughals, it was imperative to raise sword. The effect of martyrdom of Guru Arjun and Guru Tegh Bahadur was deep-rooted that prepared the Sikh community to stand up and defend themselves. The Sixth and Tenth Gurus stimulated the people to struggle for establishing righteousness and resisting tyranny and oppression.

Guru Gobind Singh gave inspiration to the vanquished people to gather strength to rise resolutely engrained in religious faith and created a revolution in the social setup. The repressive rule of Mughals was shaken. The downtrodden and peasantry was stirred into life by resorting to sword against tyrannous rulers when all other means are exhausted.

Banda Singh Bahadur was commissioned by Guru Gobind Singh to render justice; he never appropriated to himself the epithet and position of a Guru. With the blessings of Guru Gobind Singh, he infused a new vigour into the helpless masses and new hope of political ascendancy was instilled. The very first lesson of creating 'Hindustan' based on spirit of equality, communitarianism and freedom was presented through his fearless and heroic deeds. The masses later broke free their chains to liberate themselves from all shackles.

Banda Singh Bahadur who duly indoctrinated the Khalsa creed and mission has contribution to the creation of Sikh sovereign nation. His victory brought a reprieve to poor, oppressed and downtrodden segments. He demonstrated formidable might and received the boon of martyrdom only after he had extirpated evil forces in great number. He faced severe and heinous form of torture but did not falter a bit from the path of religion, nor did he condense to obey the orders of his captors. Banda Singh Bahadur inherited the supreme spirit of sacrifice from the Guru Gobind Singh. Glimpses of life of Banda Singh Bahadur and his exemplary sacrifice with same spirit of devotion is imperative to comprehend the spirit of valour and self-sacrifice of numerous Sikhs who faced all types of tortures bravely and laid their lives for righteousness.

Banda Singh gave an almost a new dimension to the history of the Punjab, which later helped in paving the way for

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the Sikhs to carve out for them their own independent kingdom of the Punjab under Ranjit Singh.

Under the ascendancy of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the Khalsa sovereignty endorsed fully the democratic and republican trait of the Sikh heritage. Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the Lion of Punjab displayed personal commitment to the Sikh values and the Sikh code of conduct, reverential attitude towards Sikh institutions and confirmed that every Sikh irrespective of his social status is subordinated to the authority vested in the Akal Takht. He erected his empire on the foundations of the Sarbat Khalsa and the Confederation of Sikh Misals. Ranjit Singh sometimes used the word 'Khalsa to mean his army'. The Government of Maharaja Ranjit Singh was addressed as 'Sarkar Khalsa Ji'. The Maharaja did not sit on the Throne or wore any crown. The coinage system under Maharaja Ranjit Singh also does not bear his name like the coins issued by Banda Singh Bahadur.

Hari Singh Nalwa was sent to Kashmir by Maharaja Ranjit Singh and remained Governor of Peshawar from 1822 till his death. He endorsed the philosophy of the Maharaja that the state belongs to Khalsa Commonwealth and not to a single individual. He restructured the deteriorating system for the benefit of the masses by reducing land tax, repealed indentured labour policies, abolished marriage and childbirth tax and ordered financial relief to the saffron farmers. His efforts have been devoted to the construction of Gurdwara Panja Sahib, in Hasan Abdal, about 48 kilometers from Rawalpindi in 1830.

The author has mentioned towering personalities from the annals of Sikh history in all trials and tribulations that are still a beacon light for numerous believers. Khalsa has been a strong edifice and exihibited their capabalites to led and distinguish between good and evil sprearheaded the oppressed and was instrumental in holding their heads in self-respect. Guru Gobind Singh, in the creation of Khalsa enthuses the Sikhs with valour and strength and there seems to be a logical continuation till date in the numerous followers of the Guru who have exhibited the same fervour even at later stage. The book covers at length, countless sacrifices over centuries by the Sikhs on which the edifice of the community is erected on and needs to be preserved for the sake of posterity.

The author through his work inspires the community to redefine and reassess our glorious heritage in a devoted manner. This will go a long way to reform the degenerating practices and reinvigorate the people at large in the present times. Such literary publications champion the ideals of our glorious past and reiterate the

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undying spirit of Gurus. The teachings and mission of the Gurus and other personalities who upheld their values and exhibited courage to annihilate evil forces are of utmost importance to enthuse the people with same fervour and will enlighten souls and minds, inculcate the feelings of accommodation, mutual trust and sense of national pride in the present times. The historical episodes mentioned in the book will be instrumental in infusing the same essence in the present generations and inspire them to be resolute.

The path of righteousness and ethical values so fervently advocated by our Gurus and the principles ordained in Guru Granth Sahib will provide a firm standing to the people in all epochs. Such writings reinvigorate people and are a valuable asset for the posterity and the efforts of S. Rajinder Singh Jolly are especially appreciable in this regard. ☐

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CONTENTS

MEDITATION	Only God's Grace Ensures Salvation	*Shabad Gurbani*	5
EDITORIAL	1984: 'INSTITUIONALIZED' Evil!	Dr. I J Singh	6
THEOLOGY	Theory of 'Property' in the Guru Granth Sahib	Dr. R S Bhalla	9
MORAL TRADITION	Redemption of the Soul: Why "Amrit vela" is imperative for Sikhs!	Dr. Manraj Kaur Gill	14
ETHICS	Human Frailty Re-Examined	K S Ahluwalia	16
HISTORY	The Legacy of Guru Arjun Dev Ji	Dr. Sangat Singh	19
	Guru as The Martyr and the Hero: Early Life of Guru Hargobind	Dr. Dharam Singh	29
CHRONICLE	Calcutta Sikhs on the Eve of the Partition - of Bengal, 1940-1947	Prof. Chhanda Chatterjee	36
TOTAL RECALL	The June 1984 Holocaust in Muktsar Gurdwara	Col. Dr. D S Grewal	43
PANORAMA	Self-development of Sikh youth in Canada	Kamaljit K. Sidhu	48
LANGUAGE	Punjabis forgetting Punjabi!	Contributed	54
RECOLLECTION	Truth is Stranger than Fiction!	Saran Singh, I.A.S.(Retd.)	57
DIASPORA	The Sikh 'Mark Zuckerberg': supports the sick and vulnerable	Contributed	58
HOMAGE	Bhagat Puran Singh: Compassion Personified	Amrit Kaur Sabharwal	60
REPORT	'INSPIRATION': An Education Motivational Programme	Arshdeep Kaur	63
TRIBUTE	An Ode to Respected Sardar Jaspal Singh Ji	Achint Kaur	67
YOUTH SECTION	The story of a Sikh family of Kashmir: Hard work and Motivation as Hallmark of Success	Jaibans Singh	69
POET'S CORNER	Sri Harmandir Sahib	Chris Mooney Singh	72
READERS' FORUM	Letters to Editor		73
DIARY	Synopsis of Notable Events		77
BOOKS	Sukhmani Sahib - The Jewel of Bliss, Vols. I & II by Prof. Beant Singh	Reviewed by Dr. Balkar Singh	80

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Only God's Grace Ensures Salvation

ਸੂਹੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

ਮਨੁ ਪਰਦੇਸੀ ਜੇ ਥੀਐ ਸਭੁ ਦੇਸੁ ਪਰਾਇਆ ॥
ਕਿਸੁ ਪਹਿ ਖੋਲ੍ਹਉ ਗੰਠੜੀ ਦੂਖੀ ਭਰਿ ਆਇਆ ॥
ਦੂਖੀ ਭਰਿ ਆਇਆ ਜਗਤੁ ਸਬਾਇਆ ਕਉਣੁ ਜਾਣੈ ਬਿਧਿ ਮੇਰੀਆ ॥
ਆਵਣੇ ਜਾਵਣੇ ਖਰੇ ਡਰਾਵਣੇ ਤੋਟਿ ਨ ਆਵੈ ਫੇਰੀਆ ॥
ਨਾਮ ਵਿਹੂਣੇ ਊਣੇ ਝੂਣੇ ਨਾ ਗੁਰਿ ਸਬਦੁ ਸੁਣਾਇਆ ॥
ਮਨੁ ਪਰਦੇਸੀ ਜੇ ਥੀਐ ਸਭੁ ਦੇਸੁ ਪਰਾਇਆ ॥੭॥

[SGGS: 766]

Translation*

If you lose the sense of belonging,
You become an alien among your own kind.

Whom shall I take into confidence?
My heart is crowded with woes - I find.

The whole world appears to be in agony,
Who is there to come to my rescue?

It is dreadful - this coming and going,
There is no escape from the snare.

Without Satguru's Name,
one is helpless and insignificant.

If you head not Satguru's command.
You lose the very sense of belonging
And you then become an alien in your own land.

*Ref: KS Duggal's "GURUVAK": The Word Divine.
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1984: 'INSTITUTIONALIZED' Evil !

*I J Singh (USA)**

Humans are not the only species with a moral sense but, perhaps, no other species has such an exquisitely honed ethical response on what they will, or will not, do.

No other species spends billions every year around the world to prevent cruelty to other species; on the other hand, none can outdo mankind in devising systems to *destroy* others as effectively either! The "other" in this could even be one of our own; we show little loyalty to our own species. In this our behavior can be glorious - or gory - to the extreme; we can climb the heights of divinity - and also plumb the depths of cannibalism and cruelty!

A brief prelude to the precarious situation of Sikhs in India today is necessary. The Sikhs are a micro-minority, barely two percent – about 25 million of India's over a billion people. A young religion barely 600 years old; its way of life clearly **rejects** the bulk of Indian mythology - including the rigidly - defined caste system, and firmly upholds an equal place for women in society. **Sikhi** does not insist on exclusivity of dogma, or doctrine, and speaks of One Creator common to all Creation regardless of nationality, gender, race, class, caste or religious labels.

Because of the clarity of their message this Minority has carved out a special niche in the Indian nation and its history. During the defining struggle for India's independence from the British in the mid 20th century, more than two-thirds of all Indians who were sentenced to life imprisonment or death by the British were Sikhs. Paradoxically, the most decorated soldiers of the British Indian Army were also Sikhs, and the W.W II cemeteries in Italy. Belgium and France bear ample testimony of their exemplary valour.

The Punjabi (largely Sikh) farmer has been mainly responsible for rescuing India from its yearly famines and also for its integrity during its many wars with its neighbors.

Yet soon after Independence from the British the political vision of the nominally democratic, new nation – India - was bent to the new realities of a numerically dominant Hindu majority. In consequence, And Sikhs lost their place as a forceful and

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independent voice. The Constitution of the new nation lumped the Sikhs with Hindus for legal purposes -- an anomaly that persists today after 68 years, and despite strong protests.

This is not the place for all of the political-economic issues that could have been easily resolved, given a modicum of commonsense and a view of belonging together as members of the same secular nation. The majoritarian structure found it more convenient instead - to brand Sikhs as 'anti-India' and reframe our differences as 'treason.' Their tools: vilification and historical amnesia!

Let us concede that the foregoing argument does no justice to the Sikh grievances, or the BJP government's handling of them in recent times. That is not our mandate today. Readers can explore the events, in excruciatingly painful detail at many Internet sites, particularly Sikhnet.com, Sikhchic.com, Ensaaf, 'Sikhs for Justice,' and others.

Let us dwell, instead, on how the Punjab situation has been managed and what it means to us today.

In a clearly political strategy, Sikhs were sidelined as antinational. In 1984 the Indian Army attacked the premier Sikh places of worship, the Golden Temple complex, on a holy day, killed hundreds of men, women and children, arrested countless numbers without trial and sealed the state of Punjab from the rest of the country. Five months later, in retaliation of this high handedness, the Prime Minister (Indira Gandhi) was shot dead by two young Sikhs.

That led immediately to a time of utter darkness that speaks to the realities in India then, and lies at the heart of a festering issue today - 31 years later.

Again, within six hours of the death of Indira Gandhi truckloads of armed Hindu mobs appeared in Sikh neighborhoods of India's capital city, Delhi, and several other cities of India. They systematically - and selectively - looted Sikh businesses and houses, burned, raped and murdered thousands of unarmed innocent civilians.

The mayhem continued for three days. The police was not there, or stood by, even egging on the killers. The military sat it out in the barracks -- not deployed! The political leadership never once appealed for calm; instead it provoked more killings.

Absolutely no one was arrested during that time; no police cases registered.

Remember that 30 years ago we were living in pre-Google times. There was no way to download lists of Sikh owned houses and businesses at the click of a mouse; yet, the mobs carried such lists! Trucks and petrol were not freely available nor were arms and guns – they have to be registered. Yet, the mobs came in trucks with guns, machetes, and kerosene - within six hours

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in many cities across the vast country at the same time.

They did what they were assigned to do, and two days later, the murderous frenzy stopped as if at the behest of an unseen hand.

Neither India's civilian bureaucracy nor its massive army has ever shown such precise organizational competence and management skills before - or since - 1984.

And the government supported - by the press and State owned television - instantly labeled the killings as "**riots**." That is a deliberate debasement of language. "Riots" are marked by spontaneity and a lack of organizational structure. The killings of Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims in 1947 were riots; the killings of 1984 were not!

Finally, the government conceded that some 3000 Sikh men, women and children were killed in those two days in Delhi alone. What happened elsewhere across India remains a closed book even today? (Independent observers insist the numbers are far greater.)

Some truths must be acknowledged.

Many Sikhs survived because of the kindness of their non-Sikh – primarily Hindu – neighbors. The first glimmerings of truth emerged in the face of governmental denials because of largely non-Sikh – Hindu - judicial scholars and citizens.

If these were not "riots" how best do we label this massacre?

There have been **pogroms** - and programmed killings in history; the list is endless. Let's focus on the 20th Century that has been dominated by murders perpetrated by states and non-state forces – death squads, paramilitary groups and guerrillas, etc. Perhaps the most evil occurs when states are responsible.

Some massacres are rightly labeled **genocide**, a term first used by Lemkin, a Polish Jew, during the Second World War and widely used during the Nuremberg Trials. These crimes against humanity are prohibited in the Hague Convention of 1907.

George Orwell, the India born British author of the classic novel "**1984**," would have been horrified by how fully India transformed his fiction into real life. ❑

FOR BASIC KNOWLEDGE, BOLD COMMENT
READ
THE SIKH REVIEW

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Theory of 'Property' in the Guru Granth Sahib

*Dr. R. S. Bhalla**

The institution of property refers to the economic needs of individuals. It refers to all those material things which serve human needs. It is a survival kit; one needs property to survive. Property plays a very essential role in human life. Humans need clothes, food, shelter etc. and the means to acquire these things. All the means to acquire property are also property such as one's skills. To deprive a person of property, one deprives one of life. Property's continued existence in one form or the other will continue so long as life continues. It is said that hungry man is more dangerous than an angry man. Angry man can be mollified by request, remorse and expressing sorry but hungry man can only be satisfied by satisfying his hunger. Hunger gives grinding and tyrannise pain. Property's need for existence one finds in the statement of Bhagat Kabir- he prays to God for giving him the things that are necessary for his living so that he can continue his life of devotion without any interruption. (ਭੂਖੇ ਭਗਤਿ ਨ ਕੀਜੈ ॥ ਯਹ ਮਾਲਾ ਅਪਨੀ ਲੀਜੈ ॥ - SGGS: 656) Kabir gives importance of food for survival so as to continue his persistence in realising God. Similarly Bhagat Dhana prays to God for necessities of life. (ਗੋਪਾਲ ਤੇਰਾ ਆਰਤਾ ॥ ਜੋ ਜਨ ਤੁਮਰੀ ਭਗਤਿ ਕਰੰਤੇ ਤਿਨ ਕੇ ਕਾਜ ਸਵਾਰਤਾ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ ਦਾਲਿ ਸੀਧਾ ਮਾਗਉ ਘੀਉ ॥ SGGS: 695)

However, one will find that Bhagat Kabir is requesting for bare necessities of life but Bhagat Dhana requests for the best of necessities such as best of grains, a horse for riding, etc. But in the end both are requesting for necessities for living so that they can give full devotion without worries and interruptions. Importance of property is made very clear in the Guru Granth Sahib by stating its importance for human existence.

Concept of Property

Property refers to an exclusive use of an object. Such a conclusion follows from the condemnation of the seizer of property by theft (ਚੋਰੁ ਕੀਆ ਚੰਗਾ ਕਿਉ ਹੋਇ ॥੧॥ SGGS: 662) Theft is condemned because it is depriving one of one's property by force against one's will- thief's invasion of property of others cannot earn him any grace even if he may be very wise and cleaver, that is, he may make good use of stolen property like helping others. It is an invasion of

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exclusive property. His worth is nothing, it is nullity.

Object means all those things, both tangible and intangible, which are necessary for human living. Object in the Guru Granth Sahib is expressed in both these senses. Bani states that education and learning skill are worldly functions. (ਪੜਣਾ ਗੁੜਣਾ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਕੀ ਕਾਰ ਹੈ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਤ੍ਰਿਸਨਾ ਵਿਕਾਰੁ ॥ SGGS: 650) these are regarded materialistic and temporal chores and tasks. They are important for acquiring material things; they are the means to acquire property.

Everyone is to labour for living. But to acquire property by stealing is categorically condemned. To steal for helping others, distributing the stolen booty among the needy, is condemned in the Guru Granth Sahib.(ਜੇ ਮੋਹਾਕਾ ਘਰੁ ਮੁਹੈ ਘਰੁ ਮੁਹਿ ਪਿਤਰੀ ਦੇਇ ॥ ਅਗੈ ਵਸਤੁ ਸਿਞਾਣੀਐ ਪਿਤਰੀ ਚੋਰ ਕਰੇਇ ॥ SGGS: 72) Truthful living is the categorical imperative of human living and any diversion from the righteous path is condemned. (ਸਚਹੁ ਓਰੈ ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਉਪਰਿ ਸਚੁ ਆਚਾਰੁ ॥੫॥ SGGS: 62) Depriving a person of his property by an untruthful action is a crime in social life and a sin in moral terms. Here one finds that the concept of property embraces within itself the sense of peaceful living, that is, social order and its necessity. Exploitation of others for one's gain in condemned in very strong terms.(ਜੋ ਰਤੁ ਪੀਵਹਿ ਮਾਣਸਾ ਤਿਨ ਕਿਉ ਨਿਰਮਲੁ ਚੀਤੁ ॥ SGGS: 140).

There is no limit in the Sikh theistic philosophy of how much a person can own. (ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਸਭ ਪਵਿਤੁ ਹੈ ਧਨੁ ਸੰਪੈ ਮਾਇਆ ॥ SGGS: 1246) However, the only condition for collecting property is by truthful means. Property collected by foul means is condemned in very strong terms. Bani gives examples of foul means used in collecting wealth such as collecting money by giving false evidence, (ਲੈ ਕੈ ਵਢੀ ਦੇਨਿ ਉਗਾਹੀ ਦੁਰਮਤਿ ਕਾ ਗਲਿ ਫਾਹਾ ਹੇ ॥ SGGS: 1032) or earning money by taking bribe in delivering justice, (ਵਢੀ ਲੈ ਕੈ ਹਕੁ ਗਵਾਏ ॥ SGGS: 951) Bani categorically demands that one should make one's living with honestly earned wealth (ਹਕੁ ਹਲਾਲੁ ਬਖੋਰਹੁ ਖਾਣਾ ॥ SGGS: 1084). One comes to the world impoverished and lacking anything and will leave the world likewise (ਨਾਂਗੇ ਆਵਨੁ ਨਾਂਗੇ ਜਾਨਾ ॥ SGGS: 1157). All the riches are left behind. One takes only the deeds with which one has earned the riches(ਮਾਇਆ ਮਾਇਆ ਕਰਿ ਮੁਏ ਮਾਇਆ ਕਿਸੈ ਨ ਸਾਥਿ ॥ ਹੰਸੁ ਚਲੈ ਉਠਿ ਡੁਮਣੋ ਮਾਇਆ ਭੂਲੀ ਆਥਿ ॥ ਮਨੁ ਝੂਠਾ ਜਮਿ ਜੋਹਿਆ ਅਵਗੁਣ ਚਲਹਿ ਨਾਲਿ ॥ SGGS: 935). For these deeds one pays in one's next birth, as one sows so one reaps.(ਜੈਸਾ ਬੀਜੈ ਸੋ ਲੁਣੈ ਕਰਮ ਇਹੁ ਖੇਤੁ ॥ SGGS: 706) This principle of karma, in fact, is the fulcrum of the Sikh philosophy, it is karmas only that are counted in the court of God and every one is to face the consequences of karma. All ups and downs of human life are the consequences of one's karma.

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Social and Moral function of Property

Because of differences in the karmas of people, they get different status and standards in life. Guru Granth Sahib does not insist on equality of people in their possessions. It does not even suggest the possibility for such equality. Since every individual perform different deeds and different deeds result in different consequences, how can one expect equality among different individuals including equality in property. When deeds are not the same, there can never be equality in the status and standards of human beings. One's standard and social status in society is determined by one's deeds.(ਸਾ ਜਾਤਿ ਸਾ ਪਤਿ ਹੈ ਜੇਹੇ ਕਰਮ ਕਮਾਇ ॥ SGGS: 1330) Each one of us is born with different faculties and uses these faculties in one's own ways. Here one finds the differences in human beings and so in their possessions. But human beings as humans are equal since God resides in everyone. All are equal, no one is high or low.(ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਊਚਾ ਆਖੀਐ ਨੀਚੁ ਨ ਦੀਸੈ ਕੋਇ ॥ SGGS: 62)

It is a moral obligation of a Sikh to share honest earned wealth with the needy persons to elevate their sufferings like God's attribute of generosity who never feels tired of bestowing gifts.(ਦੇਦਾ ਦੇ ਲੈਦੇ ਥਕਿ ਪਾਹਿ ॥ SGGS: 2) It is only by such deeds that one will understand the meaning of truthful living.(ਘਾਲਿ ਖਾਇ ਕਿਛੁ ਹਥਹੁ ਦੇਇ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਰਾਹੁ ਪਛਾਣਹਿ ਸੇਇ ॥-SGGS: 1245) Bani states that the service of human beings is a service to God.(ਵਿਚਿ ਦੁਨੀਆ ਸੇਵ ਕਮਾਈਐ ॥ ਤਾ ਦਰਗਹ ਬੈਸਣੁ ਪਾਈਐ ॥ SGGS: 26) God honours those who serve their fellow beings without any expectations. It is selfless service of others which is the devotion of God.(ਸੇਵਾ ਕਰਤ ਹੋਇ ਨਿਹਕਾਮੀ ॥ ਤਿਸ ਕਉ ਹੋਤ ਪਰਾਪਤਿ ਸੁਆਮੀ ॥ SGGS: 286) Benevolence and altruism reflect the character of God who is the master of the creation of the world. Human beings to become moral persons, saints, should imbibe the virtues of God by helping others and receiving the refuge and blessings of God.

To help the needy brings God's blessing on the provider. Sometimes it is argued that there must exist poor people to shower benefactions since if all are self-sufficient there will be no one to give assistance and donations. Philanthropic nature can only be exercised if there is a society of have and have-nots. However, to create such a society of haves and have-nots is to invite cruel and corrupt social set up. Such a method of creating poverty in society by exploitation is immoral. Rulers who act like lions and their officials act like dogs in exploiting people receive their punishment in the Court of God.(ਰਾਜੇ ਸੀਹ ਮੁਕਦਮ ਕੁਤੇ ॥ SGGS:

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1288) It is only an exploitation that can create a society of have-nots. However, in the Sikh theistic philosophy the existence of society with un-equal possessions is due to the differences in karmas. Sufferings and happiness exists among people because of their past karmas, no one can blame anyone for these plights, since such are the results of previous karmas. One who usurp others right, that is exploits others, is very severely condemned. Any foul means used by one against another are categorically denied. Escape from worldly sufferings lies in rightful conduct.

Labour is wealth, it is property. One comes in the world and labours to earn.(ਆਵੈ ਜਾਇ ਭਵਾਈਐ ਪਇਐ ਕਿਰਤਿ ਕਮਾਇ ॥ SGGS: 59) Labour is worship in the Sikh faith.(kaar kamaaveh sach kee laaha milia rajaay- 59) The nature of labour to earn one's living is not mentioned in the Guru Granth Sahib. All honest labour brings God's grace. The attributive nature of work is linked to virtuous conduct. Dignity of labour is honoured because without dignity life is not worth living.(ਜੇ ਜੀਵੈ ਪਤਿ ਲਥੀ ਜਾਇ ॥ ਸਭੁ ਹਰਾਮੁ ਜੇਤਾ ਕਿਛੁ ਖਾਇ ॥ SGGS: 142) Therefore doing work or labour one should put his soul and heart in toil and undertaking. Labour to earn one's living has religious sanctity. To earn living by begging is condemned in Sikhism.(ਘਰਿ ਘਰਿ ਮਾਗਤ ਲਾਜ ਨ ਲਾਗੈ ॥ SGGS: 903) Begging is a curse and a bagger has no self-respect and loses all human dignity. He gets contempt and has to bear torture and misery.(ਮਨਹਠਿ ਜਿਸ ਤੇ ਮੰਗਣਾ ਲੈਣਾ ਦੁਖੁ ਮਨਾਇ ॥ SGGS: 587) Sikh faith is based on the idea of self-reliance, one should serve one's needs by one's honest labour.(ਆਪਣ ਹਥੀ ਆਪਣਾ ਆਪੇ ਹੀ ਕਾਜੁ ਸਵਾਰੀਐ ॥ SGGS: 474) If one shares one's ill-gotten wealth with others, one does not share the attributive nature of God, that is, one's conduct is not considered virtuous.(ਜੇ ਮੋਹਾਕਾ ਘਰੁ ਮੁਹੈ ਘਰੁ ਮੁਹਿ ਪਿਤਰੀ ਦੇਇ ॥ SGGS: 472) This shows that the means to earn one's living is an imperative part of one's wealth. Therefore, the right to education and learning skill is universal since these are the means to earn one's living. Education also gives a person a sense of responsibility and promotes understanding among human beings.

Poverty is not a curse. Poverty or richness, pain and pleasures are linked to one's past karma, the awards of karmas of previous life, consequences of one's deeds. (ਸੁਖੁ ਦੁਖੁ ਪੁਰਬ ਜਨਮ ਕੇ ਕੀਏ ॥ ਸੋ ਜਾਣੈ ਜਿਨਿ ਦਾਤੈ ਦੀਏ ॥ ਕਿਸ ਕਉ ਦੋਸੁ ਦੇਹਿ ਤੂ ਪ੍ਰਾਣੀ ਸਹੁ ਅਪਣਾ ਕੀਆ ਕਰਾਰਾ ਹੋ ॥ SGGS: 1030) Therefore, to feel proud of wealth or curse one's poverty is due to un-enlightenment. Those who live in modesty are the real winners of God's grace.(ਸੁਖੀ ਬਸੈ ਮਸਕੀਨੀਆ

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ਆਪੁ ਨਿਵਾਰਿ ਤਲੇ ॥ SGGS: 278) Down and fall of one's wealth can occur any time due to change of circumstances. Patience and contentment in life are the real solace of life. When one dies, one leaves all wealth behind. It is the wealth that wins in the end and not the person who spends life in collecting wealth by all means. A person who uses all types of foul means to collect wealth, such a person is a loser in the court of God.(ਮਾਇਆ ਕਾਰਣਿ ਕਰੈ ਉਪਾਉ ॥ ਕਬਹਿ ਨ ਘਾਲੈ ਸੀਧਾ ਪਾਉ ॥ SGGS: 1151) Greed and pride of wealth makes one lose one's virtuous character and takes one towards evil and vices. Human desires have no limits, because of greed there is no peace of mind. Wealth collected by foul means is like poison which does not accompany at the time of death.(ਸਾਕਤੀ ਪਾਪ ਕਰਿ ਕੈ ਬਿਖਿਆ ਧਨੁ ਸੰਚਿਆ ਤਿਨਾ ਇਕ ਵਿਖ ਨਾਲਿ ਨ ਜਾਈ ॥ SGGS: 734)

The function of property is to fulfil the means of living. It becomes a duty of those who have more wealth than their requirements to share with those who need help. By doing this one will perform his religious obligations, get self-satisfaction and earns God's grace. Arrogant attitude and pompous nature creates hate and discriminatory habits towards others. Once they ingrained in a person they take permanent shape and create a vicious circle of social injustice and moral turpitude. One gets away from virtuous attributes of benevolence, mercy, truth and altruism, the qualities of a Gurmukh or saint. Amity and friendship among human beings is a paramount quality since these attributes bring an end to enmity towards each other. (ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਮੀਤੁ ਹਮ ਆਪਨ ਕੀਨਾ ਹਮ ਸਭਨਾ ਕੇ ਸਾਜਨ ॥ SGGS: 671)

Such an use of property to fulfil and answer the needs of others, no suffering, no hunger, no humiliation, no begging, will result in what Bani calls Halemi Raj (ਸਭ ਸੁਖਾਲੀ ਵੁਠੀਆ ਇਹੁ ਹੋਆ ਹਲੇਮੀ ਰਾਜੁ ਜੀਉ ॥ SGGS: 74) or Begumpura (ਬੇਗਮ ਪੁਰਾ ਸਹਰ ਕੋ ਨਾਉ ॥ ਦੂਖੁ ਅੰਦੋਹੁ ਨਹੀ ਤਿਹਿ ਠਾਉ ॥ SGGS: 345) the state of peace and happiness. Such a state of justice, fraternity and equality will bring Khalsa Raj. That will be a rule of benevolence and bring the end of all those engaged in moral degradations and exploitation of others. All will be partners in the commonwealth brought on earth by God without any discrimination.(ਸਭੇ ਸਾਝੀਵਾਲ ਸਦਾਇਨਿ ਤੂੰ ਕਿਸੈ ਨ ਦਿਸਹਿ ਬਾਹਰਾ ਜੀਉ ॥ SGGS: 97) There will prevail the rule of God's grace which looks equally upon and after all human beings. Khalsa will prevail and protect such a rule by sacrificing his life to remove the evils of communal violence and criminal activities and this is the meaning of Raj Krega Khalsa. ❑

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Redemption of the Soul
Why "Amrit vela" is imperative for Sikhs!

*Dr. Manraj Kaur Gill**

Amrit vela is considered special, auspicious time of the day. Amrit means sacred and vela is time, pehar. According to Sikhism, there are eight pehars in a day. ਹਰਿ ਜਪੀਐ ਆਰਾਧੀਐ ਆਠ ਪਹਰ ਗੋਵਿੰਦੁ ॥ ਜੀਅ ਪ੍ਰਾਣ ਤਨੁ ਧਨੁ ਰਖੇ ਕਰਿ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਰਾਖੀ ਜਿੰਦੁ ॥ [SGGS: 46] Amritvela isconsidered between 3:00 am to 6:00 am. Also known as fourth pehar of the night, few hours before the dawn.

This pehar is not only considered important in our religion only but also in Hinduism as brahmMahurat. Scientifically, it's proved that there is release of special chemicals during this time which are of great help to body.

According to the Sikh code of conduct, every Sikh should get up before sunrise, and after taking bath, needs to recite the Japuji Sahib and the Jaap Sahib of Dasam Patshah, concluding with the Tau-Prasad Swaiyas. According to Sri Guru Granth Sahib, Amrit Vela is for Naam Simran and Gurbani recitation. ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਵੇਲਾ ਸਚੁ ਨਾਉ ਵਡਿਆਈ ਵੀਚਾਰੁ ॥ [SGGS: 2]

As one sits in meditation, detached from the external world, one is able to taste the (rass)nectar, the graciousness, of the inherently divine relationship. This recitation empowers one, ushers a peaceful, detached and personal commune with the Almighty, that empower us with great energy and thoughts which help us to lead our life in right direction. This is much more hard to recreate once the world begins its busy, noisy day.

The benefits of Amrit Vela are countless, it's is the best time to get power and fill up with high energy fuel for your body and soul. There is so much silence around us, with all unwanted, noisy sounds vanished. No disturbance around us, we try to peep inside our soul, trying to focus on our inner strengths, weakness and thoughts with help of god. We can find true meaning of our life, what is the whole purpose or need of us being on this earth. Try to search that light which can take us away from this darkness filed in our souls. All these things calm us down and fill us with love, sweetness and

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pure vibrations. No space is left for all those negative thoughts or energy. strengthens our inner soul, helps to overcome many obstacles that arise in ones life. U will be able to resolve ur inner and outer conflicts.

Amrit vela is the base of strong spirituality, takes you one step closer to the supreme power.

It's written in Guru Granth Sahib ji "ਗੁਰ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕਾ ਜੋ ਸਿਖੁ ਅਖਾਏ ਸੁ ਭਲਕੇ ਉਠਿ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਧਿਆਵੈ ॥ ਉਦਮੁ ਕਰੇ ਭਲਕੇ ਪਰਭਾਤੀ ਇਸਨਾਨੁ ਕਰੇ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਸਰਿ ਨਾਵੈ ॥ [SGGS: 305]" that person is only true Sikh, who gets up at **Amrit-vela** and recite gurbani. You have to do *Naam Abhiass*, it can be any Shahbad, path or even *Mool Mantar* (*Mangalacharan*) only. But do it with great pondering, conviction and full devotion to him. We should do ardas to him that please destroy our all hankering, carving, pinning, burning and take us to state of worship, where we can find peace, solitude, calmness and harmony.

These all things will not happen to you in one day or any specific time. It takes full devotion , faith and decipline. But as time passes by you will get addicted to it and will be more determined to have this blissful experience every day. For u to wake up early it's better to go to sleep early as your body needs six to seven hrs. It's a lifestyle change, u will change in your body and health too. All the day you will be pumped will great amount of energy. Doing your regular day to day activities with more concentration and enthusiasm. Energy less, depression, anger will be out of your dictionary.

There will be no aspect in your life which will be untouched, whether body, work, relationship, health and your soul. Don't just snooze it , loose it . It's time to wake up, get up from your bed and do some action. Enjoy this sweet taste of Amrit vela and awaken not only your body but also the soul . The only path, leads you to redemption of your soul. □

The rainbird chirps in the ambrosial hours of the morning before the dawn; its prayers are heard in the Court of the Lord.

[SGGS: 1285]

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Human Frailty: Re-Examined:

"Kartoot pashu ki manas jaat Lok pachara kare din raat."

ਕਰਤੂਤਿ ਪਸੂ ਕੀ ਮਾਨਸ ਜਾਤਿ ॥ ਲੋਕ ਪਚਾਰਾ ਕਰੈ ਦਿਨੁ ਰਾਤਿ ॥

*K S Ahluwalia**

Why do I constantly crave for attention? The most prevalent characteristic across human spectrum, one of my deepest rooted frailties, one that I am constantly worried about – is- craving, seeking and getting – attention! Simply being - there and nobody - is something that just can't relate or ascribe to.

Thus to get attention, I indulge in pranks, create jarring noises, pick up argument, increase my octaves, indulge in aggression projecting and being different, or being a rebel, revolutionary!

Why, because I need you to look at me, simply can't exist in isolation.

Self has no Substance:

The reason why one seeks attention is because one is unaware of one's own self, a stranger to oneself, in fact most of us haven't even shaken hand with our own selves, most times we are cross, angry, fractured and fragmented with our own

My relationship with my true self simply is nonexistent – 'cause I take myself for granted and also my being. Thus the whole life and many more, I live with my own self as someone who is unknown, unwelcomed. Yet the Guru Granth Sahib challenges:

ਮਨ ਤੂੰ ਜੋਤਿ ਸਰੂਪੁ ਹੈ ਆਪਣਾ ਮੂਲੁ ਪਛਾਣੁ ॥ [SGGS:441]

It's only in other people's eyes that I can truly see my face, and in their opinions I seek my personality, hence what they say matters most, it's a fact for me – something etched in stone.

If they neglect me, look through me, ignore me, I feel lost, hurt- even mean! Alternatively, if I pass by and no one gives any attention, I start losing what I have carefully and manipulatively put together, my personality. Fact is that I haven't discovered it, and what I have known is - artificial, arbitrary.

Mirza Ghalib put it aptly: 'apne haalat ka khud ehsaas nahin hain mujhko/ maine

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auro se sun rakha hai ke pareshaan hoon main'!

It's not me that I am a beggar, it's across – allover and now we have accepted is as a way of life, existence and have evolved creative, innovative ways of enjoining, expanding in this misery.

"Haumein" is Lethal:

Hence we seek newer, better, finer and lethal ways of seeking attention. Yet the more we seek, the more stranger we become to ourselves- the farther we are from our own self – our authentic self.

Pause: my authentic self is complete, whole and empty – it's a vast space, it's an exploration paradise, it isn't affected by any ones opinion, attention, criticism, indifference, fear, praise etc. One here is calmness personified, centered, still and alone – who is expanding in his aloneness- one who is evolving, experiencing the experience- of being with his being.

And this is bliss – a state where everything is perfect, where everything is unique. No differences a state of Perfection – even beyond. A sate where one is continoulsy at peace – no desires and hence no beggary.

"Let Them Say!"

Remember the song 'Kuch to log kahenge, logon ka kaam hai kehna' – aptly evokes us to think beyond the obvious, remain unaffected by comments that have no bearing. People have to say something, that's the way they are, that's their nature, that's their self that they think they have known till date.

Let's pause on the word' respect'. What does it imply- it isn't honor as explained by Dictionary. It means looking again – relook- taking a plausible pause, where one is with oneself.

Reflect on history – ages across, people have tried innovative, unique methods to gain attention- defying rationalism, intelligence- punks in west, going naked, doing something that is contrary however irrational and yet ascribing the activity as a great evolutionary process.

They aren't wrong – no need to criticize them – simply see through their context – its seeking attention - like a child throws up a tantrum when feeling ignored.

It's their survival – reject me or love me, you can't simply ignore me!

Attention gives me tremendous nourishment for my ego and I simply love it, adore it, want it, and relish it, because it helps me to feel important and wanted.

Ego is Demeanings:

Being a beggar for attention, is a human reality, reason being that I am

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dependent on my personality (acquire traits) and not individuality (being traits). Personality is false, a face off, a mask, given by the society- hence can be taken off by it. Its isn't my power, the main switch is in others' hands- who may tamper it at their will.

Discovering ones individuality is like being in a meditative state – now and always and once you are aware of knowing your own self, you start being humane.

Even if the whole world forgets you, it doesn't matter, it creates not even an iota of difference to you, on the contrary existence opens up – it showers gifts at you, it encompasses you, immerses us, makes you an integral part of oneness – that which is complete, full, yet empty.

You start listening, enjoying the sound of silence, solitude, you become a signature yourself and hence don't need to sign, the ego evaporates, disappears, vanishes.

Conclusion:

ਸਗਲ ਅਨੰਦੁ ਕੀਆ ਪਰਮੇਸਰਿ ਅਪਣਾ ਬਿਰਦੁ ਸਮ੍ਹਾਰਿਆ ॥
[SGGS: 806]

Recap– To be a giver and not a beggar- let us revisit the following:

First: strike a chord with your own self – drop the ego – drop pretence.

- Don't depend on others – be true to your own self.
- Listen to you inner Self – listen-not judge- then evaluate.
- You are fully capable of knowing your own self. No extra effort is needed; In fact no effort is needed; only awareness is required.
- There is nothing as seeking respect, reputation or respectability. You be aware, be in the now and they would follow. Stop chasing them, let them follow you. Stop getting driven by them.
- Reality belongs to you, as God's child- the kingdom lies in your heart.
- Miracle happens when others start feeling your charisma- the radiation of your individuality. Now you are unique. Yet, deep within, you are unaware of this as this isn't important for you anymore. You have got it without even asking for it.
- Hence simply rejoice, expand, exhilarate, celebrate – as that's what exisistence is all about. No more face masks, no ego, simple calmness and stillness pervades all over: The Ultimate Realisation.

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The Legacy of Guru Arjun Devji@

*Dr. Sangat Singh**

The era of Guru Arjun Dev (September 1581-May 1606) was marked by a rare liveliness, vitality and high spirit in the realm of Sikhism. He was an exceptional by genius. He belonged to the new generation, born after the passing away of Guru Nanak.1 Sikhism during his period made rapid strides to come into notice as a powerful third force, independent of both Hinduism and Islam. Above all, he raised the level of Guru to that of sachcha padshah (true king)2 as against the worldly kings whose position was ephemeral.3

The achievements of Guru Arjun are to be viewed in the context of the fierce resistance he met from within the family – his elder brother Prithi Chand who externalized the conflict and sought assistance of the hostile elements to contain the growing influence of Sikhism. But it had little impact, if at all, on Guru Arjun who remained calm and composed till the very last.

Guru Arjun tried to defuse the crisis en famille. He transferred all the property of his father to Prithi Chand who was not appeased. Prithi Chand at the moment was being instigated by high caste Hindus who already were on the lookout to contain the Sikh movement. Assisted by a wily Brahmin, Mahesh Das alias Bir Bal, one of the nine gems of Akbar's Court, the detractors tried to fish in the troubled waters. At Bir Bal's instance, the district revenue official, Sulhi Khan, too aligned himself with the detractors.

With the help of some misguided masands, Prithi Chand started preaching that he had been invested with the Guruship and not Arjun Dev. He was able to mislead some simple-minded Sikhs. The state of his meanness could be judged from the fact that he would collect their offerings and direct them to the langar of Guru Arjun to take their meals. That rather contributed to his undoing.

The efforts of Bhai Gurdas who, by now was back from Agra, to persuade Prithi Chand to adopt the path of sanity fell through. Bhai Gurdas in disgust gave him and his collaborators the plural epithet of miné, deceitful or highway robbers, which stuck

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@ Excerpted from his magnum-opus: *The Sikhs in History. Martyrdom - Shahidi of Guru Arjun Devji* usually falls in June.

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to the clique. The leading Sikhs successfully combated misleading propaganda of Prithi Chand, who otherwise met series of setbacks.

Prithi Chand with the assistance of detractors prepared a Memorandum (mahjar) leveling charges against Guru Arjun and presented it to Emperor Akbar who treated it with the contempt it deserved.4 The wily Bir Bal was killed in 1586 when on a campaign against Pathans in the Frontier. Sulhi Khan marshaled his resources to attack Guru Arjan but, on the way at Haher whereto he reverted to confer with Prithi Chand, met unholy death when his horse along with him jumped into a brick oven.5

Guru Arjun was least distracted by these goings on. Right from the beginning, he concentrated on the missionary tours and the construction work, which went hand in hand.

Ramdas Sarovar shortly afterwards renamed Amritsar, the pool of nectar, Santokhsar and Guru ke Mahal (Guru's residence) all left midway by Guru Ram Das were completed around 1588. The foundation of Harimandir, now also known as Golden Temple, was laid on Maghi, Sunday, December 28, 1588, - the foundation stone being laid by the renowned Sufi Saint of Qadiry Order, Mir Mohamed Khan, known as Hazrat Mian Mir of Lahore.6 Harimandir, unlike Hindu and Muslim places of worship, was built at a lower level than the surrounding area. It had doors on all the four sides, signifying both humanity and universalism and that it was open to people of all the denominations.7

Side by side, during his extensive missionary tours of Majha and Doaba, Guru Arjun founded the towns of Sri Gobindpur on Beas. Tarn Taran, Kartarpur, apart from the city of Amritsar for which he invited people of all trades and professions. The religions centres established at these places became centres for consolidation of the Guru's following. Tarn Taran had the privilege of having the biggest sarovar, tank, and emerged as the centre for cure of leprosy victims. The Lt. Governor of Jalandhar Doab, Syed Azim Khan, who became Guru Arjun's disciple, played a leading role in establishment of Sikh centre at Kartarpur.

Guru Arjun also built a Baoli at Dabbi Bazar Lahore, (it was paid for by Wazir Khan, Governor of Lahore), a couple of wells at Tarn Taran, Gangsar well at Kartarpur which had as pure water as that of Ganges, a huge well with six wheels at Chheharta near Amritsar and another well with three wheels at Amritsar. He also laid Guru ka Bagh apart from some other constructions like Ramsar at Amritsar. Guru Arjun's missionary tours were a great success in attracting disciples, cutting across religious lines. These included hill Rajas of Kulu, Saket, Haripur and Chamba who visited him at various times. The Malwa was aptly covered by Masands.

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The widespread building activity was indicative of sharp increase in the number of Sikhs, who according to Mohsin Fani of Dabistan-i-Mazahib were found in all parts of Hindustan and beyond. It also invited a reorganization of Masand system to channelise the funds for construction work. With the consent of the Sikhs, daswand, i.e. one-tenth of their earnings was fixed. It was carried by Masands to the Guru on Baisakhi day. He also encouraged the Sikhs to enter into trade activity, especially those of Turki horses, and also probably himself entered that trade. It made the Sikhs to have trade encounters with tough Pathans of the trans-frontier region. Afghanistan and beyond. It enriched them and also the Guru's treasury. Besides, the hazards of horse trading made them some of the finest horsemen of Asia.

That was not an incidental development. His son Hargobind, born on 21 Asarh, June 18, 1590, as part of his education got thorough training in horse riding, swordsmanship and warfare at the hands of Baba Buddha. Guru Arjun could foresee the need for the new orientation in view of the persistent hostility of local muqaddams and faujdars on their own and at the instigation of Prithia and malignant upper caste Hindus. They were hand in glove with one another.

Guru Arjun's perception of the times to come was notwithstanding Akbar's high regards for him. According to the Court historian, Abul Fazal's Akbar Namah, Guru Arjun accorded a profuse reception to Akbar on November 24, 1598, at Goindwal. Akbar was really impressed by Guru Arjun's "bewitching and handsome appearance, sweet and melodious voice and fascinating and charming manners, his princely style of living, his warm reception and his singing of hymns" in praise of God.8 At Guru Arjun's instance, Akbar issued orders to remit the revenue by one-sixth.

It may be mentioned that Guru Arjun was a great lyricist. His hymns had a rare quality to touch the symphony of one's heart.

He mostly composed short hymns in simple language of the people. These straightaway affected the emotions of the singer and the listener. His Sukhmani, psalm of peace, still remains a masterpiece to put at ease a disturbed mind and provide it instant solace. Guru Arjun's bani, hymns, captivated the heart of the people and proved an effective instrument in spreading the Sikh panth.

By the time, Prithia's attempt to compose his own hymns in the name of Guru Nanak posed a threat to corrupt the Sikh philosophy. The compilation of Guru Granth had already been on the agenda of the Sikh panth. Guru Nanak had passed on the collection of his hymns to Guru Angad who had them copied and widely distributed. Guru Nanak had also collected Farid's compositions. Guru Angad enlarged the collection by adding those of some more Bhaktas. Later, Guru Amar Das had

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collected the hymns of his predecessors and his own as also of a number of Bhaktas, into pothis, volumes.

Guru Arjun, shortly after Akbar's visit, early in 1599, began the project of compilation of Adi Granth.9 Bhai Gurdas was appointed amanuenses. Guru Arjun took five-years to complete the project. Adi Granth was ready in 1604 when it was installed in the Harimandir with Baba Buddha as the first granthi.10 It was placed at a high pedestal while Guru Arjun himself sat at a lower level to emphasize that shabad, Word, is the Guru. It was embodiment of the Guru himself.

The compilation of Adi Granth was a major achievement of Guru Arjun.

Guru Arjun, like his predecessors, was a connoisseur in music and put it to good use in organising the Adi Granth including the hymns of bards and Bhaktas in various ragas, musical meters.

He also exercised great caution in selection of hymns of Bhaktas for inclusion. He rejected compositions like Pran Sangli obtained after considerable effort from Ceylon, being spurious. His ideological parameters were clear.

The Adi Granth enunciated unadultrated monotheism and humanism. It reflected pan-Hindustani and beyond, matter of fact, existence of Sikhism.

The death of Emperor Akbar in October 1605 marked a sea change in the policy of his successor, Prince Salim alias Nuruddin Jahangir, who out of political necessity was forced to uphold Islamic Puritanism of Naqashbandi revivalists led by Khwaja Mohammad Baqi-Billa (1564-1603) of Turan.11

Shaikh Farid Bukhari, one of his followers had emerged as a strong force in Akbar's Court by the end of the latter's reign, while the spiritual mantle fell on Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi also known as Mujadid Alif-i-Sani (1561-1624).

After Salim's revolt, and Akbar's forgiving his errant son and proclaiming him heir-apparent, the leading nobles of Akbar's Court were divided into two factions. One, favouring Akbar's policy of Din-i-Ilahi and Sulha-i-Kul (Peace for All), favoured liberal minded Prince Khusrau, Salim's son, and held Salim unsuitable for kingship. The other, of Islamic fundamentalists, sick of Akbar policy of religious tolerance, aligned with Salim and extracted promises to reverse Akbar's religious policy and further the cause of Islam at the cost of the non-Muslims.12 They were to be humiliated and shown no quarters. Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi's letters, Maktubat-i-Emam-i-Rabani, fully reflect his philosophy of contempt for the non-Muslims.

In Punjab, the Hindu position was listless except that they would hobnob with the convenient officials against the growing Sikh influence.

Guru Arjun's high profile, active, missionary preachings, and pan-Hindustani

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aspirations rankled in the mind of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi who, in one of his letters, described Guru Arjun Dev as Chief of Infidels –Rais-i-ahl-i-Shirk– and a leader of the Kafirs – imam-i-kufr.13 Gokal Chand Narang describes Guru Arjun Dev as "the first great organiser of the Sikh nation."14 In the words of Mohsin Fani, the Sikhs had by now "become accustomed to a form of self government within the Empire".

Khusrau's indiscreet revolt against his father on April 6, 1606 and his hurrying to the Punjab, on way to the North West Frontier, to gain adherents greatly helped to strengthen the position of Islamic revivalists. Khusrau was pursued by Shaikh Farid Bukhari who in turn was being followed by Jahangir. The persons who directly or indirectly helped Khusrau were immediately punished.

Khusrau crossed river Beas and was followed by Shaikh Farid Bukhari who inflicted on him a crushing defeat near Bhairowal Khusrau was captured on April 27, 1606, near Chenab and brought as prisoner to Lahore.

Jahangir crossed to Beas on April 26, and was encamped at Jhabal. Upto May 22, i.e. for 27 days, there was no mention at all of Khusrau's calling on Guru Arjun much less the latter's blessing him.

Around May 23, a report about Guru Arjun's blessing Khusrau and affixing a saffron mark on his forehead poured into Jahangir's ears. That made him to call for Guru Arjan into his presence.

That sets the stage for Jahangir's entry in his memoirs, Tuzak-i-Jahangiri, which reads: "There lived at Goindwal on the bank of the river Biah (Beas) a Hindu named Arjun in the garb of a Pir and Shaikh, so much so that he had by his ways and means captivated the hearts of many simple-minded Hindus, nay, even of foolish and stupid Muslims and he had noised himself as a religious and wordly leader. They called him Guru, and from all directions, fools and fool-worshippers were attracted towards him and expressed full faith in him. For three or four-generations they had kept this shop warm. For a long time the thought had been presenting itself to me that either I should put an end to this false traffic or he should be brought into the fold of Islam.

"At last during the days when Khusrau passed along this road, this insignificant fellow made up his mind to see him and conveyed preconceived things to him and made on his forchead a fingermark in saffron which in Hindu terminology is called qashqa (teeka) and is considered propitious. When this came to the ears of our Majesty, and I fully knew his heresies, I ordered that he should be brought into my presence and, having handed over his houses, dwelling place, and children to Murtza Khan (Shaikh Farid Bukhari) and having confiscated his property. I ordered that he should be put to death with tortures."15

The first part about popularity of Guru Arjun and his mission was correct. The

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second part about Guru Arjun's blessing Khusrau was a pure concoction, 16 probably the work of Shaikh Farid Bukhari who might have used Chandu as a tool. As Ganda Singh points out, "Never in the whole history of the Sikh Gurus, there has been any occasion for any Guru to anoint anyone, Sikh or non-Sikh, with a teeka. Even the succeeding Guru was never teeka'd by any Guru himself. The teeka or tilak ceremony of the succeeding Guru was always performed by a leading Sikh. In the case of Gurus Angad to Hargobind, the ceremony was performed by Bhai Buddha, a venerable old Sikh coming from the days of Guru Nanak. And the same practice was followed upto the time of Guru Gobind Singh, tenth and last Guru."17

From the details in Tuzuk-i-Jehangiri, it is obvious that Jahangir was looking for an opportunity to fix Guru Arjun. He left the details of punishment to be worked out by Shaikh Farid Bukhari on whom he had conferred the high title of Murtaza Khan – one who had gained the royal pleasure. Tuzuk does not mention of any fine being imposed on Guru Arjan, as has been mentioned by some contemporary sources like Dabisan-i-Mazhaib and Jesuits. That seems to be the result of a mix up.18

Guru Arjun nominated Hargobind as his successor and left for Lahore. He was subjected to a number of tortures. The Sikh traditional accounts mention that Guru Arjun was made to sit on hot iron plate, hot sand was thrown over his body, and he was boiled in a cauldron. Dabistan-i-Mazhaib mentions of his being deprived of food and water and put into the hot blazing sand and stoned which caused blood to ooze out of his head. He was tortured for 3 to 5 days.

With wounds blistering on his body, on May 30, 1606, tied hand and feet, he was thrown into river Ravi wherein he disappeared.19 In the words of Bhai Gurdas, Guru Arjun though in great pain on the night of May 29- 30 was fully composed, with hymns in praise of God on his lips.

Guru Arjun's martyrdom, the first of its kind in the history of Hindustan, the sub-continent, caused great resentment and indignation among the general body of Hindus and Muslims, apart from the Sikhs. One tends to agree with Ganda Singh that "much of the Chandu-story was given currency to in those very days to shift the responsibility of tortures inflicted on the Guru from the Mughal Officials to the Kafirs.20 Chandu was only a minor official at Lahore, and hostile to the Sikh Panth.

The non-implementation of Jahangir's orders about taking over of Guru Arjun's property and children remains inexplicable, notwithstanding Sikh tradition accounts about intervention of Mian Mir who at that stage had no influence either with the Emperor or Shaikh Farid Bukhari, the main actors in Guru Arjun's martyrdom. □

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References

1. The first three successors of Guru Nanak were at various stages of their life at the time of his passing away in 1539.

2. Rattan Singh Bhangu in Panth Parkash relates a popular tradition that power and pelf of the world kept 12 kos (30 kms) from Guru Nanak and six kos from Guru Angad. It knocked at the door of Guru Amar Das and fell at the feet of Guru Ram Das, while in Guru Arjun's time it got admission into the house.

   The fable beautifully describes the gradual evolution of the social and political power of the Sikhs. Cf. Gokal Chand Narang, Transformation of Sikhism, (Delhi, 1989 ed), p.44.

3. The idea was extant in Guru Amar Das's time, but took concrete shape under Guru Arjun Dev.

4. Gauri M. 5, 99, A.G., p.199.

5. Bilawal M. 5, 104, A.G., p. 825 According to Muslim belief one, who is burnt to death, goes to hell.

6. For a bio-sketch, see Dr. Surinder Singh, "The Life and Times of Miyan Mir.", PP&P, Vol. XXII, October 1986, pp. 243-72. There are assertions by some scholars that the foundation stone was laid by Guru Arjan himself.

7. This made Prithia to construct a corresponding centre at Haher, wherefrom his wife came.

8. Cf. Hari Ram Gupta, History of the Sikhs. Vol. 1, The Sikh Gurus. 1469. 1708, (Delhi, 1984), p. 134. It was during this visit. Akbar looked into the complaints about the Guru's bani being tinged with anti-Muslim or anti Prophet expressions.

9. Ibid. p. 135.

10. It included hymns of Guru Arjun and his predecessors. Rababis and Bhatts associated with various Gurus, and Bhaktas both Muslims and Hindus, including Shudras and Outcastes from different parts of Hindustan.

    The hymns in Adi Granth were arranged according to Ragas, musical meters and their sub-meters. This resulted in intermixture of the hymns of all the Gurus in a particular Raga. Then followed the hymns of Bhaktas beginning with those of Kabir

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and ending with those of Farid. At places ther was interspersing of hymns of Gurus and Bhaktas. It was an integrated compilation which gave equal importance to each contributor.

11. Khwaja Mohamad Baqi Billa (1564-1603) arrived in India by close of the 16th century, and established new Sufi order which advocated the use of state power for Islamic preaching.

12. Ganda Singh, "The Martyrdom of Guru Arjun", PP&P. Vol. XII, April 1978, p. 163.

13. Ibid, p. 171.

14. Narang, n.67, p. 46.

15. Ganda Singh, n. 77, p.160.

16. Bhai Vir Singh while editing Gurprtap Suraj Granth (pp.1189-92), holds a prolonged discussions and comes to the conclusion that Khusrau never called on Guru Arjun, and rather it was the work of Guru Arjun's opponents, including Prithi Chand, Brahmins and high caste Hindus and Maulvis. Cf. Narang. N. 67, p. 48.

17. Ganda Singh, n. 77, p. 165.

18. In the very next item in Tuzuk, Jahangir mentions of cases of Raju and Amba, one of whom was fined Rupees, 1,15,000. This caused some confusion about Guru Arjun being fined. Ibid, p. 175, also Gopal Singh, A History of the Sikh People, 1469-1988, (Delhi, 1988), pp. 194-95 for Jesuit Letter of 1606-07 published in Lisbon in 1609.

19. Ganda Singh, n. 77, pp. 169-70.

20. Ibid. p. 172. It may be mentioned that Sikh traditional accounts mention of Chandu, a Divan as the main tormentor. They were not aware of Tuzuk-I-Jahangiri's mentioning of Guru Arjun which came to light only in 1931. Or of the Naqshbandi order.

Not cast down by sorrow
Nor over-elate in joy;
Aloof from the power
Of pride, greed, and coveting:
Such a man, saith Nanak,
Is the image of God.

[SGGS: 1326]

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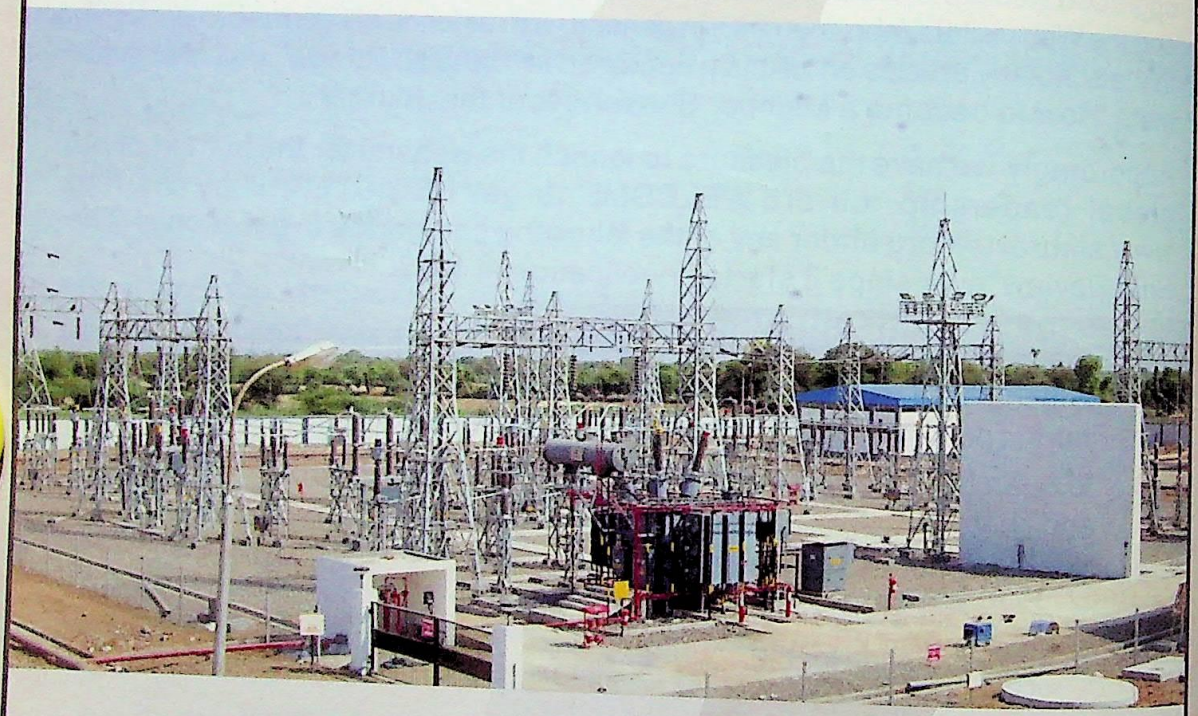
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Guru as The Martyr And The Hero: Early Life of Guru Hargobind

*Dr. Dharam Singh**

Guru Hargobind was born in AD 1595 at wadali. The first two years of his childhood were spent in the countryside of Majha. It was the time when the central Punjab region passed through a severe drought. Guru Arjun Dev, along with his family, went from village to village in the interior countryside providing succour to the suffering. The family returned to Amritsar in l597 when young Hargobind was just two years old.

When Guru Arjun Dev devoted himself to ameliorating the suffering of the drought hit Majha area of Punjab, his elder brother, Prithi Chand was busy hatching conspiracy to liquidate the newly born. Over the next two years he made several attempts, of which the Sikh chronicles relate two incidents with a fair degree of authenticity.

First, Karmo, wife of Prithi Chand, sent for an old maid of the family. She hired her to poison the newly-born son of Guru Arjun Dev. Besides the money given as advance, she was loaded with promises of affluence if she succeeded in her nefarious mission because that would mean, Karmo argued, Guruship for her own son, Meharban. The deceitful nurse applied poison to the nipples of her breast, mixed some more in what we call gurhati and proceeded to Wadali. It was just a day or two after the child's birth. It was a mere coincidence that the child, owing to some temporary indispositlon refused to accept breast milk. Thus the family was in great anxiety. Karmo felt time was opportune for carrying out her design. She assured Mata Ganga, the mother of (Guru) Hargobind, that with her long experience of looking after the infants she would soon cure the child with the help of some homemade medicines. Mata Ganga was taken in by her specious words and gave the child to her. Now the nurse tried to give poisoned gurhati to the infant, which too he refused. Then she drew out her breast and offered it to him.

The moment she did so, she fainted and fell backwards. When she was restored to consciousness, she confessed her evil intentions. The news of Prithi Chand's instigation for the child's murder spread like wild fire, thus causing him deserved obloquy. Guru Arjun's hymn of thanksgiving celebrates:

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The Lord, in his mercy, saved Hargobind. The calamity passed and it was rejoicing, even as we mediate upon His Name. So is the greatness of the Perfect Guru He, my Creator-Lord, has succoured me, Gracious Guru Nanak has laid the firm Foundation. That goes stronger with each passing day.

Another attempt at killing the child Hargobind followed the abortive first design. This time, Karmo and her husband Prithi Chand hired a snake charmer and induced him with monetary allurement to kill the child by exposing him to a deadly cobra. The snake charmer managed to slip the cobra into the courtyard where young Hargobind was playing. The child took the hissing reptile in his hand and killed it instantly.

(Guru) Hargobind, along with parents, arrived in Amritsar in AD 1577. The Sikhs of the town felt very happy to have their Guru amongst them. So there were great rejoicings and illuminations. Although Guru Arjun, accompanied by his son, called on both his brothers, Prithi Chand and Mahadev, yet the fire of evil aflame in the former's heart did not extinguish. He received the Guru with pretended courtesy and blessed the family but continued in his heart to hatch conspiracies to kill young Hargobind so that the path to pontificate was cleared for Meharban.

Guru Arjun Dev did not stay at Amritsar for long as he frequently went to the drought-affected villages. Epidemics like smallpox had also broken out. It was during one such tour near Lahore that child Hargobind contracted smallpox. The child got high fever developing virulent pustules. The family was advised to pay obeisance (as was the common practice among the ignorant rustics of the region) to goddess Sitala. But Guru Arjun rejected this suggestion on the ground that smallpox was a physical ailment and that one should pray only to the one supreme Reality. A Gurbani hymn provides scriptural testimony. The disease ran its course and the child Hargobind recovered:

"The Lofty Lord has shown His mercy.
Nanak, he alone lives who repeats Name.
In company of the holy he drinks elixir divine."

However, Prithi Chand did not relent. He seemed to be so consumed with envy that he and his wife induced the Brahman servant who used to look after the infant Hargobind, to put poison in yogurt. But the child refused to take it and raised hue and cry. Now remorse and repentance took over the evil-doer. He developed colic and died in agony. A hymn in Gurbani symbolizes God's mercy even as it indicates man's cruelty:

The poison produced not an iota of ill-effect,

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But the vile Brahmin died of colic.
Lord Himself protects His devotees.
The sinner died by the Guru's power .....
The Supreme Lord heard prayer of the slave Nanak:
Getting hopeless, the vile sinner passed away.

It was around the turn of the Century that the family returned to Amritsar. Guru Arjun Dev himself got busy in the construction of the Harimandir and the compilation of the scripture, the (Guru) Granth Sahib. Hargobind had also become around six years of age. So the father put his son under the tutelage of Baba Buddha who was entrusted with the education of the child Hargobind. The Sikh chronicles record that Guru Arjun had, in the first instance, gone to his recluse brother, Mahadev with the suggestion that he takes over the job of educating the boy. However, Mahadev was of the opinion that the delicate duty of educating successor to the pontificate be entrusted to Baba Buddha who had been associated with the Gurus from the time of Guru Nanak. Besides his education in Punjabi, he was taught the use of defensive weaponry, riding, swimming, astronomy, chemistry, medicine, agriculture, administration, and other sciences. On the completion of his education, he was taken by his father the Fifth Guru to the Harimandir to offer thanks giving to the Almighty.

Offers of marital alliance started coming when Hargobind was barely ten years of age. One such offer came from Chandu Shah, Diwan or finance minister of the Emperor. Chandu originally hailed from the Punjab though, presently, he resided in Delhi as necessitated by his duties in the royal court. He possessed considerable wealth and properties, besides wielding immense power. He had a daughter, ChandKaur by name, whom God had blessed with extreme beauty. As she became 7 years of age, Chandu sent out professional matchmakers to search out a suitable match for his daughter. The match had to be found within the Khatri (one of the four castes into which the Hindu social order was vertically divided) clan, and the family had to be equal to Chandu's in status and wealth. The match-makers could not find a better choice than (Guru) Hargobind, but Chandu Shah felt much annoyed when the envoy reported this to him. However, he agreed after some time to send the proposal. But, meanwhile, the Sikhs of Delhi had learnt of the derogatory remark Chandu had made against the Guru when the match-maker first raised the issue with him. The Sikhs petitioned that the proposal from such arrogant man be rejected. The Guru duly obliged. It was Chandu who, in order to avenge that humiliation, instigated the Emperor against Guru Arjun, and was partly responsible for his martyrdom.

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However, the assembly of the Sikhs which had gathered to petition the Guru to reject any alliance with Chandu did not disperse without selecting match for (Guru) Hargobind. One Narain Das, a humble Sikh from Dalla, rose up and offered the hand of his daughter in marriage to young Hargobind. The Guru happily accepted the proposal. Narain Das had hardly completed the betrothal when another Sikh, Hari Chand stood up to say that he also had a daughter whom he had pledged to (Guru) Hargobind. Although Guru Arjun was reluctant to accept the proposal of a second wife for his son, he had no choice but to accept the Sikh's offer. Thus, both Narain Das and Hari Chand completed the betrothal ceremonies on the same day. Incidently, it was the day Chandu Shah had fixed as an auspicious date for the betrothal of his daughter - Maghar sudi 7, 1604 BK. And, the envoy sent by Chandu to contract the alliance were still present in the gathering.

Here, a word about Guru Arjun's acceptance of the proposal of a second wife for Hargobind might be appropriate, lest it should be misunderstood. During the historical Guru-period, Sikhs were so devoutly attached to the Gurus that it was quite common among them to pledge to the Gurus their lives, their children, their property. The girls vowed by parents to be married to the Guru or his son were treated as 'mothers'. None else might marry her except to whom she was vowed. Thus Guru Arjun had to accept the proposal. This was also the reason why Guru Gobind Singh had to accept a third "wife" even though he had vowed celibacy by that time. As history stands witness, Guru Gobind Singh had no children by this wife and, instead, she has been remembered as the 'mother of the Khalsa Brotherhood'. The point we make is that Sikhism advocates monogamy, and the rare incidents of polygamy in these cases was not to lower the status of woman as such but only to honour the commitment made by parents of such girls because, otherwise, they might have to spend their entire life-time as spinsters as none else in the Sikh society would ever think of matrimonial alliance with them.

The priest and envoy sent by Chandu Shah felt humiliated by the Guru's refusal to their proposal and accepting the proposal from the humble Sikhs. Chandu felt greatly incensed on learning this, but he concealed his real feelings and instead wrote a letter to the Guru. In this letter he is said to have apologized for having made a derogatory remark against the Guru: it was reported to the Guru that Chandu had reacted to the match-maker's suggestion that he consider marrying his daughter to young Hargobind by saying that an"ornamental tile cannot be used in a gutter." The Sikh chronicles relate that Chandu admitted that the words might have thoughtlessly escaped his lips. He

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expressed his willingness to give away his daughter as a second or third wife to Hargobind. At the same time, however, he gave veiled warning as well. He told the Guru that Prithi Chand was already opposed to the Guru and if enmity with Chandu is added to it the Guru will 'nowhere find an abiding-place.' The thrust of this letter was an advice to let the begones be bygones and a threat of evil consequences if the advice was not followed.

The letter reached the Guru who saw through the arrogance, for he was neither tempted by reward nor cowed down by threats. When the messenger felt that neither the letter nor his own explanation could persuade the Guru to accept Chandu's offer, he returned to Delhi and reported the matter to his master. Meanwhile the Guru resolved that young Hargobind's marriage with (Mata) Damodri, daughter of Bhai Narain Das, be solemnised as early as possible. Accordingly a day was fixed, Magh sudi 7, 1661 BK/AD 1604, and Bhai Narain Das rushed back to his village to make arrangements. An invitation was sent to Prithi Chand but he refused to participate in the celebration. The marriage was in realitya betrothal: child marriage being the norm. The consummation of such marriages invariably waited till the age of puberty.

Now Prithi Chand had in Chandu Shah anally in evil: both had a grudge against the Guru. Emperor Akbar who was known for his liberal views in the matter of religion and who enjoyed cordial relations with the Gurus, died on 17 October 1605. Jahangir ascended throne on 24 October 1605. He was known for his orthodoxy, and was, out of political necessity, forced to uphold puritanism of Naqashbandi revivalists led by Khwaja Mohmad Baqi-Billa (1564-1603) of Turan. His spiritual successor, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, whose letters (Maktubat-i-Emam-i-Rabani) reflect his contempt for non-Muslims and his derogatory remarks against Guru Arjun; one of his followers Shaikh Farid Bukhari became Jahangir's close confidant: the latter was responsible for the arrest of Prince Khusrau and was given by the Emperor the honorific of Martaza Khan. Khusrau was arrested on 27 April 1606 near Chenab and was immediately brought to Lahore. Emperor Jahangir who was following Murtaza Khan crossed the Beas on 26 April and was encamped at Jhabal. Upto 22 May, i.e. 27 days after Khusrau's arrest, there was no news of Khusrau calling on Guru Arjun, or the latter blessing him: it is around 23 May that news poured in the Emperor's ears, which was perhaps the work of Murtaza Khan in connivance with Chandu.

It was only natural that religious tolerance and principles of co-existence would decline. This provided an opportunity to men like Prithi Chand and Chandu to complain against the Guru as a potential

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force that may one day challenge the Delhi throne. The forces inimical to the Gurus who had earlier failed in their attempts to instigate Emperor Akbar against the Gurus now found the opportunity to suit their cause. They also found an ally in Mahesh Das, alias Bir Bal, one of the well-known courtiers of Emperor Akbar, at whose instance Sulhi Khan, a Pathan revenue official, too became hostile, while Prithi Chand continued his tirade against the Guru. Prithi Chand retained Sulhi Khan's help to somehow usurp the spiritual throne occupied by the Guru. He managed to obtain permission of the Emperor to proceed to the Punjab on the pretext of collecting revenue there. On his way he visited Prithi Chand at the latter's residence at Kotha-Guru, in the present-day Bathinda district. They spent a long time together hunting in the vicinity and concocting plans against the Guru. One day Prithi Chand took him along to show him some brick kilns he had made. On arriving, Sulhi Khan's horse got scared at the accidental flight of a bird from under its feet. The animal ran with its rider straight into the kiln in full blast, and in a matter of minutes both became a mass of cinders. 'If anyone flouts the poor by stroking his beard at them the Supreme Lord will burn him in fire' – and the death of Sulhi in fire was the 'perfect justice administered by Him', says Guru Arjun in a hymn. Guru's following verse also refers to the incident.

God preserved me from Sulhi.
Sulhi who failed and died ignominiously.
God drew forth His axe, and smote off his head:
He became ashes in a moment.

Prithi Chand also died without seeing his nefarious designs bearing any fruit. After him, his son, Meharban, joined hands with Chandu in similar machination. They found a ready partner in certain qazis who found compilation of the Guru Granth Sahib "blasphemous" since it did not follow the Hindu rules of worship or the Muslim way of prayer and fasting. They incited the Emperor into believing that some of the hymns included in the Sikh scripture were against the established Islamic spirituality and that these be got expunged. They were successful inducing the Emperor to summon the Guru to the imperial court. Earlier, Akbar had also got the scripture read at several places at random, but he was fully satisfied with the spiritual tenor of the hymns included therein.

Guru Arjun could now easily perceive the evil designs of Emperor Jahangir. So he anointed Guru Hargobind to the pontificate and advised the Sikhs to follow his advice. According to Kesar Singh Chhibbar, Banasavalinama Dasan Patshahian ka, the ceremonies marking succession took place on 29 June 1606. The Sikh chronicles also record that Guru Arjun advised his successor to wear the

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sword and cultivate martial spirit as protection of religion and morality was not possible without arms.

Guru Arjun was arrested and tortured continuously for several days at Lahore: he was first made to sit on the red hot metal plate, and hot sand was poured over his body. Chandu was personally supervising these tortures, and his heart now felt gratified for having secured his revenge. Guruji was offered safety of life provided he agreed to pay a fine of Rs. Two lacs and change or delete certain hymns in the scripture. Chandu also offered to intercede with the Emperor if he accepted the hand of his daughter for his son, Hargobind. Several holy men also called on the Guru to sympathise with him in his affliction. Mian Mir, the famous Sufi saint, was one of the callers. Max Arthur Macauliffe, in his The Sikh Religion gives a very graphic account of the Sufi's last meeting with the Guru at this time.

And so Guru Arjun sacrificed his life at the hand of bigotry and inhumanity of Jahangir, aided and incited by the machinations of certain persons inimical to him and his mission. It was Jeth sudi 4, 1663 BK / 30 May 1606.

Guru Arjun had on Jeth vadi 25, 1663 BK, i.e. a few days before his martyrdom, nominated [Guru] Hargobind his successor though the ceremonies of succession took place on 26 Haar, 1663 BK or 24 June 1606. According to Sri Guru-Pratap suraj Granth, Guru Arjun had sent him instruction "to asscend the throne defensively armed, and have armed man, as many as you can, to accompany you." ❑

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Calcutta Sikhs on the Eve of the Partition of Bengal, 1940-1947

*PROF. CHHANDA CHATTERJEE**

Calcutta in the 1940s on the eve of the Partition had a teeming Sikh population numbering about 30,000. They were mostly concentrated in Howrah, Burra Bazar and Bhowanipore areas. While those in Howrah were Railway employees or employed in factories, some had their shops in the Burra Bazar and Harrison Road area. Bhowanipore was the area where most of the motor transport workers were concentrated. The Burra Sikh Sangat was situated in Burra Bazar while the Sikhs in the southern part of the city had their prayers and meetings in the Gurdwara Jagat Sudhar on the Rashbehari Avenue. The Gurdwaras not only took care of the religious concerns of its congregation. They were also the places from where the Granthis (learned men able to recite and interpret the Shri Guru Granth Sahib) and the Gianis (men well versed in religious knowledge) could control and direct the political ideas and activities of the congregation. Thus the Gurdwaras were like the nerve centre of the Sikh people.

The Calcutta Sikhs were, however, a volatile lot, having constant communication with the land of their origin in the Punjab. They were often visiting their native villages in the Punjab and were sometimes having relatives and properties there. Very often they were having agricultural land in their native villages and were often visiting their villages during the rabi harvest to claim their share of the crop. Their leaders were not unaware of the importance of this distant constituency in the eastern corner of the sub-continent and were often visiting them to collect their contributions for the promotion of the political case of the Sikhs in the Punjab as well as to familiarize them with the political issues governing the fate of the Sikhs in the Punjab.

It is also interesting to note that although the Sikhs in Kolkata or further inside the country in Kharagpur, Budge Budge, Asansol or Burdwan were engaged in non-military pursuits, some of them often had a military background and were discharged military personnel. As enquiries revealed in the case of Master Harnam Singh Konka of P.S. Jagraon, district Ludhiana, that he had fought in China and Afghanistan in 1915 in the 36th Sikh Regiment and came to Calcutta in 1931 and started a school for Sikh children at 57 Puddo Pukur Road in Bhowanipore. The

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school was later bought by Sardar Labh Singh for the Singh Sabha and Konka had to shift to Gurdwara Jagat Sudhar and teach 300 students on a monthly salary of Rs. 40. This school had to be closed during the Second World War as Sikh families evacuated due to fear of Japanese aggression. Konka then shifted to Rupnarayan Nandan Lane and later to Beni Nandan Street and sublet some of the rooms in his house to taxi and motor drivers. When Gurdeo Singh, working as a clerk in the Singh Sabha joined the Military as a commissioned officer, Konka again went back to the Gurdwara Jagat Sudhar and took charge of office work from March 1942. Konka's career sufficiently demonstrates that the dividing line between civilian and military employment in the lives of Sikhs was very thin and any civilian of yester years might be recruited any time and ex-military personnel could also be engaged in civilian occupations any time.[1] It was easily possible to gain access to the military personnel through the Granthis and Gianis , who often visited the Sikh regiments posted in Calcutta.[2]

The Calcutta Sikhs were peculiarly responsive to all the political issues affecting the fate of distant Punjab, which was a Muslim majority province. It always struck a sympathetic cord in their heart as Calcutta was also situated in a Muslim majority province. They were thus able to feel the predicaments and anxieties of the Calcutta Hindus, who were scared to be included into Pakistan in the same manner as the Sikhs of Punjab. Although numerically a minority of 13% in their own homeland the Sikhs paid the highest amount in land tax, had the maximum number of educated men and women and above all contributed the largest number of military recruits to the British Indian Army. Their former Maharajah Dalip Singh had given the Punjab to the British to hold it as a trust and they believed that it behoved on the British to return the province to the Sikhs if they happened to leave the country. The Pakistan Resolution of 1940 had come to them as a terrible shock and they were determined to resist the plan at any cost. Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee, who had recently been made the working President of the All India Hindu Mahasabha travelled as far as Lyallpur in May 1940 to stand by the distressed Sikhs in their hour of crisis. The Sikhs had been terribly alarmed at the prospect of having to part with their flourishing settlements in the Canal Colony districts of Montgomery and Lyallpur. The Azad Punjab scheme did not appeal to them much as it would leave vast Sikh areas outside its proposed borders. The studied silence of the Ramgarh session of the Congress regarding this Resolution further intensified the suspicion of the Sikhs as to the real intention of the Congress. They were disillusioned with the opportunistic stand of the Congress at their expense and welcomed Shyama Prasad Mookerjee's call for an end to appeasement of the Muslim League.[3]

Sikh leaders responded whole heartedly to the efforts of K. M. Munshi to

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organize Indians under the banner of a new outfit named Akhand Hindustan (Indivisible India). K.M. Munshi tried to gather the support of intellectuals and political thinkers for this movement and proposed the name of the poet Rabindranath Tagore as the President of society committed to the unity of India.[4] A conference of the Akhand Hindusthan society in the University Institute Hall, Calcutta was presided over by the octogenarian leader Ramananda Chatterjee in August 1941. There was a huge gathering of 1500 consisting of Hindus as well as Sikhs. Joginder Singh, a former minister in the Unionist cabinet in the Punjab, came to address this meeting and said that India would rise as one man to prevent the vivisection of the country. Dr. Shyama Prosad Mookerjee said that while earlier the word 'Pakistan' was only heard in whispers it had lately come close to materialization as the British desired it to happen.[5] This was followed up by a meeting in New Delhi on October 8, 1941 where the Akali leader Principal Ganga Singh promised to stand 'solidly by the Hindus as a rock' in the maintenance of Akhand Hindustan. The Akalis had already put forward the idea of Azad Punjab which, Ganga Singh explained, was similar to the creation of the Muslim province of Sind through a readjustment of the boundaries of Bombay. Master Tara Singh claimed that the Sikhs had always been the 'Gate Keepers of India', who had to bear the brunt of every struggle. The Punjab could not be a Muslim province as it had been conquered by the Sikhs. This was the land where the Sikh Gurus had been born and their heroes died heroic deaths. "The Punjab is our Province. It is a Sikh Province. We cannot and shall not be exiled by Mr. Gandhi. We shall once more save the Punjab and save India."[6] N.C. Chatterjee, the Hindu Mahasabha leader from Calcutta (father of the Former Lok Sabha Speaker Somnath Chatterjee) lamented the fate of 11 million East Bengal Hindus, who would go under Muslim rule in East Bengal if Pakistan was established.[7] This was the beginning of a long history of Sikh co-operation with the Hindus both in the Punjab and in Bengal to get physically organized and intellectually disciplined.

Dr. S. P.Mookerjee continued his efforts to include Sikh sympathies in his scheme of organizing united resistance to the idea of Pakistan. He encouraged the Sikhs in trying to build a Khalsa College in the land adjoining Gurdwara Garcha. The programme was announced by Sardar Narain Singh Panch, President of Sri Guru Singh Sabha. Rupees one lakh was collected for the purpose and a managing committee was formed with Sant Master Singh Ragi, three members and Sewadar Sarvan Singh. This 14 bigha plot had been a gift from a follower based in Patna. But the gift was later challenged by the brother of the donor. Dr. Mookerjee offered to mediate but the Muslim Sub Inspector A. Kadir suspected a plot to establish a Hindu University and launch a military training centre in collaboration with the Sikhs. This

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probably brought the ruling Muslim League government heavily against it and the efforts were aborted.[8]

The Cabinet Mission proposals of 1946 created great agitation in the mind of the Calcutta Sikhs. They greatly resented the way they had been placed among the Muslim majority Group B states without any safeguards. While both the Hindus as well as the Muslims were allowed a veto to block any legislation that threatened to affect their community in an adverse manner, the Sikhs were not given any such veto. They had only a four member representation among 38 members, which meant that their voice would be drowned among so many members unless they had the power to veto any decision which might affect their community adversely. The Panthic Pratinidhi Board decided to pull out of the Constituent Assembly elections but in the end Narinjan Singh Gill, the Chairman of the Committee of Action, responded to a request from Nehru and decided to contest the four seats reserved for the Sikhs.

These safeguards were a burning issue when on 16th August 1946 the Muslim League decided to launch the Direct Action Day. Although peaceful in most parts of the country, Direct Action day saw the hell descend on Calcutta streets with casualties by the scores. Sir Frederick Burrows, the Bengal Governor, sent daily reports to the Viceroy and the Secretary of State narrating the events of the day and the measures taken by him to quell the violence that raged for nine days on end from the 16th of August to 23rd of August. Trouble on the Harrison Road side was brought under control when the Military patrol was started from the night of 17th (2 a.m.). But the riot continued unabated on the Chetla-Alipur-Mominpur belt on the Bhowanipore side, where some of the areas of Muslim slum areas were located.[9]

The Sikh Kirpan did a wonderful job in this hour of crisis and appeared in the role of the saviour of the middle class Bengali Hindu residents of the southern parts of Calcutta. 'The Sikhs played a major role in saving thousands of lives from the diabolical clutches of Muslim hooligans' and emerged as 'the backbone of the Hindus.'[10] The Sikhs opened refugee camps in Calcutta in the wake of the riots in Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha, 31, Rashbehari Avenue, Khalsa High School, 3, Puddo Pukur Road and 161 Harrison Road, where free food, transport and medical aid were provided.

The Nazimuddin government in Bengal with only one Scheduled Caste Hindu minister to represent the 48% Hindus of the Province, tried to impose a ban on the Sikh right to carry the Kirpan soon after.[11] B.S.Batra, the Propaganda Secretary of the Shri Guru Singh Sabha, wrote an article on the Sikh Kirpan calling it 'the precious life blood of the Sikh who has entered into a spiritual wedlock with it.' He dwelt on the intrinsic role of the sword when Guru Gobind had had founded the noble order of the Khalsa. The Sikh took his spiritual birth from the sword.[12] A Sikh had to go on a hunger strike since he was relieved of his

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small Kirpan according to a press release of the Shri Guru Singh Sabha.[13] The Singh Sabha also condemned the cowardly attacks on Sikh buses and motor drivers in Wellesley Street, Kidderpore, Park Circus, Narkeldanga, Rajabazar and Kalootola side in open streets and in day light by 'Muslim League hooligans' in spite of the Peace Missions organized by the Muslim League leaders.[14] Repeated assurances by the Chief Minister and the Governor were to no avail. Drivers and conductors were stabbed, national flags in front of buses and taxis were snatched and torn to pieces and there were incidents of stone throwing and mob attacks without any provocation. The motor transport workers threatened to stop transport services if attacks were not stopped. A Sikh deputation led by Dr. S.Dohi, Secretary, R.K.Jaidra, Vice-President and Sardar Ajaib Singh, a member of the Bengal Bus Syndicate and Sardar Hari Singh, Assistant Secretary, Calcutta Taxi Association met the Police Commissioner and were advised not to ply buses in dangerous areas.

As news of the Muslim atrocities in Calcutta and the East Bengal districts reached Punjab the Sikhs developed a sense of empathy with the inhabitants of Bengal.Immediately after the Noakhali riots Narinjan Singh Talib, the Editor of the Gurumukhi paper Desh Darpan addressed a meeting of the Sikhs in New Delhi on 13th October, 1946 to express the solidarity of the Sikhs with the persecuted Hindus of East Bengal in no uncertain terms :

I feel it my duty to condemn in no uncertain terms the happenings in East Bengal. All citizens everywhere must be fully prepared for honourable, immediate and firm defence. Sikhs not only in Bengal but in the whole of India cannot remain unperturbed by such hooliganism when our very religion is based on fighting oppression and cruelty. I hope and pray the rest of India and the Land of Five Rivers will never be tarnished by such events.[15]

Several Sikh leaders from the Punjab like Sardar Pratap Singh, Member, Congress Working Committee, Baba Bachan Singh, Parliamentary Secretary, Government of the Punjab and the Akali leader Prof. Mota Singh visited Calcutta for the celebration of Guru Nanak's birthday as well as to study the situation in Calcutta on the ground level. It was announced that Sardar Udham Singh Nagoke, the President of the Shiromani Akali Dal would accompany Sardar Niranjan Singh Talib of Bhowanipore to visit Noakhali and Tippera. The Sikhs of Jheria and Asansol wanted to back their efforts by the presentation of a purse.[16]

The Bihar riots of November 1946 and the influx of a large number of refugees from Bihar into the Bengal districts alarmed the Sikhs as much as the Hindus as to its probable implications as to the communal ratio in Bengal. They feared a further tilting of the scales in favour of the Muslim population of Bengal, which was already having a large Muslim majority. The Bengal Branch of the Hindu-

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Sikh Minorities Protection Board urged the Bengal Government for the repatriation of the refugees from Bihar to their home province and not to try to settle them in West Bengal. As an alternative to this, the Sikhs requested permission from the Bengal Government to come and settle in East Bengal districts in large numbers and set up Gurdwaras and allow them equal rights and opportunities for this purpose.[17]

Calcutta was the focal point of trouble on the eve of the Partition as both communities, the Hindus and the Muslims, were engaged in a game of one-up-manship in the Cabinet Mission negotiations over the formation of the Interim Government and the Constituent Assembly. Wary of their own heavy stakes in the Punjab they felt akin to the Hindu Bengalis of Calcutta and tried to retrieve their sinking ship from the impending wreck as much as was possible under the circumstances. ❑

Endnotes:-

1. Statement of Harnam Singh Konka dated 11.9.43 in Intelligence Branch File no. 313-41 in West Bengal State Archives, Kolkata
2. Director, I.B. Letter no. SA/516 II dated 22.7.46 in I.B. File 313-41 in WBSA
3. S.P.Mookerjee Papers in the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi
4. Hindusthan Standard, 14.7.41 in I.B. File 600-41 in WBSA
5. Hindusthan Standard 21.8.41 in Ibid.
6. Hindusthan Standard, 9.10.41 in Ibid.
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8. Hindusthan Standard, 22.11.46; Report by A.C.I.O., Central Intelligence Office, Gariahat Road, Ballygunge, 5.12.1944 in I.B.F ile 313-41 in WBSA
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12. Ibid.
13. Nationalist 22.9.46 in ibid.
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15. Nationalist, 25.10.46 in ibid.
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17. Report of 21.2.47 in File No. 313-41 in WBSA

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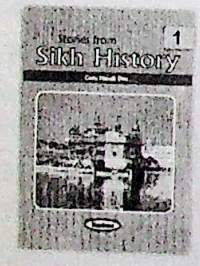


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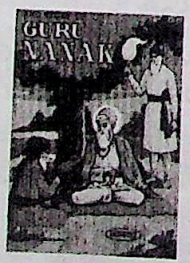


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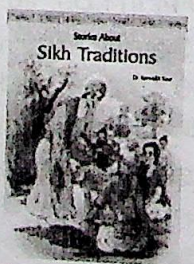


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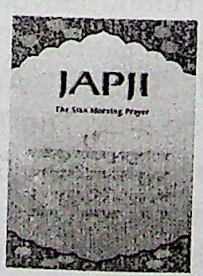
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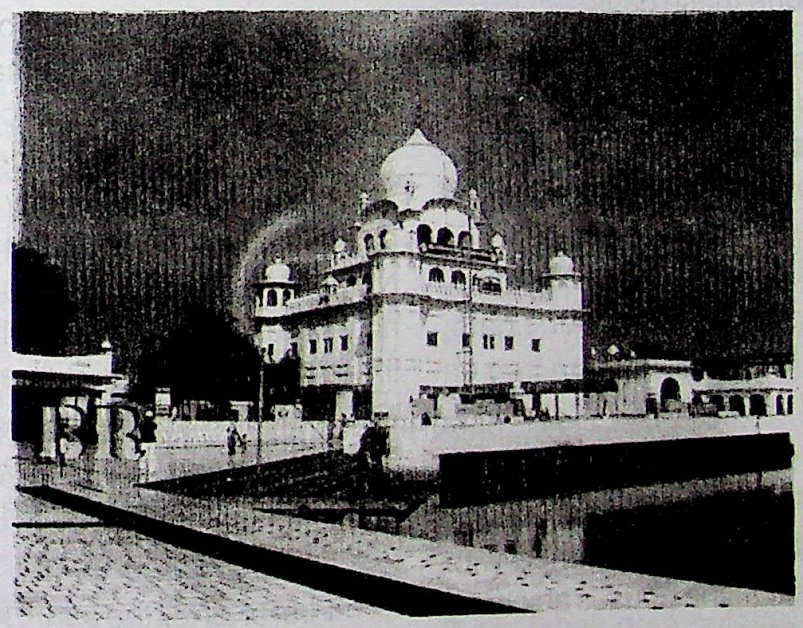
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The June 1984 Holocaust in Muktsar Gurdwara

*Col Dr Dalvinder Singh Grewal**

In the modern era, 1984 remains the darkest year for the Sikhs, when they- not only suffered grievous loss of life and property, but also an irreparable loss to their power and prestige. I would confine this article only to the historical events of 1984 at **Gurdwara Tuti Gandhi, Muktsar**. No political thought or consideration has been taken into account. The details of this account have been provided by eye-witnesses of the event: Bhai Bahadur Singh, Bhai Piara Singh, Gyani Suba Singh, Sardar Bhatia and Sardar Swaran Singh,- with confirmation from the available official and unofficial records.



3 June 1984 was the Martyrdom Day of Guru Arjan Dev, the Fifth Guru of Sikhs. The congregation was specially sanctioned for the occasion on the day. In addition to the public functions and sewadars of Gurdwara appointed by SGPC, the others who were present within the precincts of Gurdwara complex were the Head *Granthee* and families of the employees to whom living quarters had been allotted within the periphery of the Gurdwara. The entire *Gurdwara Tuti Gandhi* was destroyed in this ugly incident, hence, it remains the focus of this paper. The Gurdwara complex had a boundary wall all around. The complex had eight gates (numbered 1 to 8) along the boundary wall, for the entry into the Gurdwara complex. *Gurdwara Tuti Gandhi* was next to Gate No. 1. In front of Gate No 1, were the banyan tree and a well-known as *Bohad Waala*

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Khuh. In 1984, the main door of *Gurdwara Tuti Gandhi* was towards *Gurdwara Shahidan* in the North.

On the left edge of the Gurdwara was the Nishan Sahib of Sarb Loh metal, which the Maharaja of Nabha had imported from England by spending Rs 70,000 to celebrate the birth of his son, Hira Singh. To erect it, a multi-storied building, known as **Attari**, was constructed. This Nishan Sahib was supported by the Attari by attaching iron rods to it. No wires were used for support- as is normally done these days.

The holy sarovar, the site of the battle field, was behind the *Gurdwara Tuti Gandhi*. In between these were the steps of lime stone. In between the steps and the Gurdwara were a baradari in one corner and the counter for Karah Parsad on the other. The counter was close to number 1 gate, between the well and the Banyan tree on one side and gurdwara in the backside.

In 1984, curfew was imposed by May-end, and the BSF was deployed all around the Gurdwara Complex fully armed with modern weapons. On the houses adjoining the boundary wall they had made bunkers wherefrom they kept regular observation on the entire *Gurdwara* complex and the area around. The 'warriors' of the sikh students Federation were stated to be positioned, with obsolete weapons at attari, and the baradari with which they could not hold against any attack from the well-armed BSF. Most others were young Sikh boys from neighbouring villages who, having been hounded out by the police due to their assumed past connection to Bhindranwale, had taken shelter in Gurdwara complex to save themselves from 'encounter killing'. Indeed illegal encounter killings was the talk of the town.

On the morning of 4th June- the date of army attack on Sri Harmandir Sahib complex (along with thirty other *Gurdwaras*) Sri Muktsar was also targeted. According to Bahadur Singh, who was then on Sentry duty in the Gurdwara complex: it was announced at 2.40 AM, that, 'Whosoever was in the Gurdwara complex must surrender immediately; otherwise the firing was going to start." Exactly one hour later; at 3.40 AM, the guns started firing from Gate Number 4 which is on the other side of the holy water tank (sarovar). The first round of the artillery gun hit the *Attari*. Thereafter it was such a devastating firing that it created havoc. Bahdur Singh remembered seven rounds having been fired that set ablaze the whole complex.

First of all fell the attari, then the *Baradri* and next was the counter subsequently with the following gun fire. Then the rounds fell on the Gurdwara. The Gun fire was so intense that the entire Gurdwara collapsed. The girders of the *Gurdwara and Baradari* melted in the fire. The *Birs of Guru Granth Sahib* were also destroyed in the fire. New Birs later brought from Sri Amritsar were installed in place after the matter settled and

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a new Gurdwara complex constructed through *kar seva*.

The new *Gurdwara Tuti Gandhi* now faced towards the water tank; earlier it faced other side towards *Gurdwara Shahidan*. There are two *Nishan Sahibs*' now; one at the previous site where the old *Nishan Sahib* has been re-erected by attaching it to the main building with the help of iron rods in place of the old *attari* which was devastated in the fire; and the second one towards *Sarovar* close to the new gate of the Gurdwara.

The fighters of Sikh Student Federation left the Gurdwara complex even before the first round was fired. The few who were left behind were the visitors who had got stuck within the complex due to the curfew and did not know where to go.

Bahadur Singh further stated, "When the first announcement was made, I was on duty with my spear. I started helping the family staying in the Gurdwara complex to get out of the complex by making them jump over the boundary wall. The present Jathedar of *Akal Takhat* was then the Head Granthi of *Gurdwara Tuti Gandhi Sahib*. I helped him along with his family to cross over the wall. But when I was about to jump across, I was caught by the soldiers. They also fired a burst behind the Jathedar; who however escaped. A buffalo of Dharam Singh Patwari, which came in the field of fire, was killed. During this period, a carpenter named Gulu, standing in front of his house, was shot by the soldiers. His last rites were performed later in the day behind *Tamboo Sahib Gurdwara* in the dera of *Nihang* Sikhs.

After the Gun fire was over, the soldiers charged the entire Gurdwara complex with MMGs, LMGs and assault rifles. A fighter from the complex threw a grenade at the charging soldiers, killing one and injuring another. Another fighter jumped out from the hiding and tried to pick up the weapon of the killed soldier, but fell to the burst of fire from an LMG. The firing continued till morning. No one knows how many fighters or soldiers were killed as soldiers were very fast at taking away the bodies of the dead and wounded. What did they do of those wounded is not known.

The firing stopped at day break. All those who were arrested were ordered to lie down on the boundary floor (*parikarma*) of the sarovar laid with white stone. The construction of Tamboo Sahib was in progress those days. Construction was being done through free service (*kar sewa*) duly organized by Baba Harbans Singh and Karnail Singh *Kar Sewa Wale*. They were then in their dera outside the periphery of the Gurdwara complex. They were also brought in the prikarma and thoroughly questioned, but were however, released after the officers got a phone call from Delhi.

Gurdeep Singh of Village Maujewala, about 60 years of age, had come to pay obeisance at the Gurdwara on the eve of Guru Arjan Dev's martyrdom day, had a

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cloth bag under his arm pit. When the soldier asked us to raise hands; the aged person first did not understand the order, but when one of us explained him what to do, did raise his arms above his head. As he raised his arms, the cloth bag fell from his arm pit and he tried to grab it with the second hand. The soldier probably thought that the person is going to throw a hand grenade; he fired an LMG burst direct on to the head of the old man. The old man's skull was partially blown to pieces and he died instantly. We were immediately ordered to lie down and we stuck our faces to the ground. The *Nihang* of *karniwala* was also killed in the similar manner.

As the day dawned, the floor became iron hot due to direct hot sun rays in that month of June (*Asadh*). Our bellies started burning with heat. We were feeling very thirsty. If we requested for water we got kicks in turn. The whole day we went through this extreme torture and the dryness affected adversely causing sickness to many. We could not do anything except to remember the martyrdom day of Guru Arjan Dev and the situation he was put through on this day. We remembered that if we were put in a boiling pot, or made to sit on heated iron plate or burning hot sand was put on our heads, could we stand that torture? We faced solace that we were not among the dead and got much less than Guru Arjan and sang in our hearts, "*Tera kia meetha laage. Har naam padarth Nanak mange.*" However, our hearts were still waiting for the unknown.

The entire day passed in burning heat and facing tortuous questioning. In the evening, out of about 400 Sikhs encircled, 62 were separated who were taken to nearby B.Ed.College where we were locked in a room. There were no light, water or fan in the room. These 62 people included 6 employees of Gurdwara. Other people were either the devotees who visited the gurdwara for paying obeisance or some youth who had taken refuge after having been hounded out by the police. These included S. Lal Singh an old man of 70 years, and Gurpal Singh a child of 12 years. We were all hungry and badly feeling thirsty. We were all locked in such a small room where we could barely breathe. Faced by extreme heat and thirst, the Storekeeper of *Gurdwara*, Baldev Singh had died in *parikarma* itself, we also awaited such death in this dingy room.

Second day again they started questioning us about our past and present activities and the activities of the persons inside the complex. The hunger and thirst had made us so week that we were not able to speak. Seeing this state and to meet the requirement of questioning they gave us two dried loafs of bread each. Due to the pointed bonnets at us, it became extremely difficult to eat. We were then put in the prison and case number 162 was filed against us on 7 June 1984, under provisions of 307/201, 435/295A, 322/353, 156 and Arms Act 25/54/59 and remand obtained. I got the copy of the charge sheet alongwith the list of all the individuals who were listed in the charge sheet. The arrest was shown on 17/6/84 and

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the first police remand was obtained upto 25/6/84 after which this remand was extended upto 1/7/84 for which we were shown as very clever and hardened criminals and the truth was entirely hidden.

They tortured us even beyond the breaking point. One *Thanedar*, Amar Singh was full of evil and hatred. He made false cases against us and tortured and tormented us incessantly. He spoke too foul degrading words worse than at dogs. He tied cloth on our eyes, attached wooden nameplates and photographed us many times. Sometimes he would place rifle grenades or other lethal weapons and got us photographed. We even requested that we do not know how to handle the weapon and have seen these weapons for the first time but it was of no use as he neither cared us nor heard us. He wrote what he wanted and got our signatures and thumb impressions by force. This he was to use against us in false cases. 'The 70 years' old Lal Singh was shown as driver of Bhindranwale and was charge-sheeted for this case as well even though he did not know driving and held no such license. Another Sikh Army Officer also spoke very rudely but a Rajput Officer who was stated to belong to *Sikligar* community had lot of sympathy and realized the entire situation and treated us humanely.

The food given to us in the jail was too bad and not worth eating. The bread loafs were half-baked and of the size of camel feet. The dal used to be just boiled water with a few grains here and there. At one time, one of the inmates Harinder Singh got so annoyed that he threw the plate with dal roti in the air. It spread all around, the plate hitting the ground with a bang. A sudden calm spread everywhere. Harinder Singh was a very brave young man who was never afraid of death. This event caused fear psychosis among the officials and they started giving us better food.

We had the worst time like this for over six months, till our case startedin the court and we were shifted from Muktsar to Fardikot Jail. There, the SDM, Rajan was a very good person and we had better days than Muktsar Jail. DC Faridkot was Sardar Sidhu who knew the facts and the treatment given to us earlier. He too had sympathies with us. We faced the court and remained in jail but nothing criminal was proved against us and all the 61 persons were released by the Barnala Government after 18 months and 11 days of ceaseless torture and hellish life. During this period, the families of some of us had even performed their last rites. When we came out, we came to know that Jaskaran Singh of Rupana, Harminder Singh and Darshan Singh of Muktsar were martyred in encounters and Waryam Singh Khapianwalli was tortured to death. Others may have also been killed but I do not have much knowledge."

This version of Bahadur Singh was also corroborated by other direct witnesses of the event; Gyani Suba Singh, Gyani Balwant Singh Rasia and others. □

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Self-development of Sikh youth in Canada

*KAMALJIT K SIDHU**

One of the most talked about issues facing contemporary Sikh society is the retention and transmission of the Sikh faith. Sikhism is a way of life, and retention of Sikhism involves the incorporation of Sikh values, ethics, and ideology into each of our sense of who we are as individuals and social and spiritual beings. In order to understand why Sikhism is not being incorporated into the lives of the younger generation, we need to understand how these youth are developing a sense of who they are, also described as an individual's sense of self, or identity.

I recently completed research examining the process of self and identity development of second generation Canadian Sikh adolescent males. This investigation was carried out between November 1997 and February 2000, as my Ph. D. dissertation. Although the study specifically examined identity development of Sikh males, based on my personal and professional experience, I believe that many aspects are generalizable to the lives of young Sikh women as well.

In this study, I used a broad definition of the term "Sikh." I recruited for those young men self-labelling as Sikh because I wanted to study the larger phenomenon of those who refer to themselves as Sikhs. 28, 2 to 2 ½ hour interviews were conducted with young men aged 16 to 19. Interviews were transcribed and then analyzed to identify the key process and subprocesses involved in the development of a sense of who each young man was, and who he was becoming. A theoretical model of the process of how these young men are constructing a sense of who they are was developed. This model is not my personal opinion, but a summarized version of the voices of young Sikh adolescents growing up in Western Canada. This is their perspective. In this paper, I will first present an overview of key elements of this model. Then, I will focus on some of the issues involved in identity formation of second generation Sikh youth and present possible avenues of intervention.

1. Self-labelling as Sikh

Although all young men in the study labelled themselves as Sikh, they varied with respect to their practice of Sikhism.

- there were those who were baptized and consciously practicing Sikhism - they kept their five K's, did their daily Nitnem, and were actively trying to incorporate Sikhism into their lives - some were involved with Sikh youth groups.

- there were those who were not baptized but wore a dastar and actively

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attempted to learn about and practice Sikhism, as well as those who wore a dastar but did not feel a connection to spirituality

- there were those who had an interest in religion/spirituality but were not currently interested in integrating Sikh spirituality into their lives - these young men indicated that they desired to be religious but felt that they were unable to practice religiosity in their current lives - they imagined more actively exploring religiosity when they were in their late 30's and 40's.

- there were also those who had no interest in exploring and incorporating Sikhism into their lives, currently or in the future.

The **term Sikh** provided a sense of personal and collective historical and social identity, even to those who did not desire to incorporate religiosity into their lives.

2. The model - Being strong enough to stay on track

Overview of the Model

In this theory, constructing a sense of self and identity is seen as a process that parallels a Sikh youth's construction of a projected path of development, or track, that integrates aspects of three social scripts he is exposed to, and sees as relevant to him.

The **term script** is used specifically to refer to a socially accepted and expected pattern of attitudes, values, and behaviours seen as influencing life choices by Sikh youth.

The **three scripts** that adolescent Sikh males growing up in Canada saw as relevant to them were the Panjabi ethnic sociocultural script, the Sikh religious/ spiritual script and the dominant Canadian sociocultural script.

The term **dominant culture** is used to refer to the predominantly Euro-American mainstream culture of Western Canada.

The **function of the track** is to provide each Sikh male a sense of continuity of past, present, and future aspects of who he is and who he is becoming within a social context.

The central process in constructing a sense of self and identity is **being strong enough to stay on track.**

Quote: (Hardip 18) **Overhead**

"I gotta look at myself and just do whatever I can to achieve my goals. And like I can't, I have no power over the way other people look at me. So, I just gotta continue doing what I'm doing and just like stay on the track that'll get me to my destination. Getting settled, having a good job. Like, being able to provide for my family."

The **elements, sub-processes, and meanings** of being strong enough to stay on track are an interplay between current and future-oriented intrapersonal and interpersonal concerns about getting an education, having a career, becoming married, having children, incorporating religiosity, and achieving prosperity in the Canadian context, while maintaining a sense

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of connectedness and belonging in the social and spiritual domain.

There are **three subprocesses** involved in being strong enough to stay on track. These are: constructing an initial track, staying on track, and reconstructing the track.

The **construction of an initial track** is seen by second generation adolescent Sikh males as guided largely by Panjabi immigrant parents. Panjabi parents are seen to selectively socialize their sons to particular values, attitudes, behaviours, customs, language, and traditions, which integrate elements of the Panjabi ethnic sociocultural script and the Sikh religious/ spiritual script, thereby imparting expectations of what is normal development for their children. Becoming financially, socially and spiritually set are elements of this subprocess.

Staying on track is multifaceted, dynamic, and future oriented. It is grounded in each Sikh male's construction and clarity of a track and his ability to be strong enough to stay on track while being immersed in his present life context in Canada. It is influenced by the subprocess of aspiring to be my best while striving to be set.

Through exposure to the dominant culture through school and friends, and visual media and music, Sikh males become aware of the dominant sociocultural script. This propels them into integrating the three scripts and **reconstructing the original track.** With increasing cognitive abilities and social experiences in the dominant culture in childhood and adolescence, each young man continually makes daily choices that influence the maintenance or modification of elements of the various phases of the original track. Therefore, progress on a track as well as modification of a track is seen as an active process that becomes more conscious and deliberate in adolescence. Integrating the three scripts may be a complicated process, especially where adolescent males see aspects of the Panjabi ethnic or Sikh religious script in direct contention with elements of the dominant sociocultural script. Reconstructing the track is influenced by the subprocesses of, being guided versus doing it alone, belonging while avoiding exclusion, and managing visibility. How youth manage these processes influences the degree to which they feel strong enough to stay on track and their subsequent development and clarity of a sense of self and identity.

In this grounded theory, **Being strong enough** is defined as the ability to persevere through psychological confusion and distress associated with trying to construct a track, stay on track, and reconstruct the track while meeting one's needs for psychological continuity, rootedness, and belonging within the Panjabi ethnic, Sikh religious, and dominant culture social contexts.

This model gives us an understanding of how Canadian-born adolescent Sikhs are constructing a sense of who they are and

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provides us a basis for transmitting Sikhism to our youth and assisting them in retaining the Sikh religion.

3. Implications for intervention with Sikh youth:

I will specifically address interventions at the family and community level.

1. Putting our youth on track

It is clear that the initial track is constructed through selective integration of the various scripts by Sikh parents. Thus, the sole responsibility of putting our children initially on track rests with parents. We put our children on the spiritual track by integrating elements of Sikh religion into their lives when they are young. I have heard said about young children. Koi Na Aape Sikhi wal aajaan gai waday hokay. How often have we seen young children who have not been brought up with Sikh culture actually come back to Sikh culture in this Canadian context? Not very often. In order to have our children incorporate Sikhism into their lives we must not only encourage them to become financially and socially set, but spiritually set as well. We say, "***jadh apne buchay set hogay ta apnay saray fikar muk janay.***" According to the young men in the study, Becoming financially and socially set attends to getting a good education, having a prosperous career, and being happily married with children. Becoming spiritually set on the otherhand focuses on our relationship with God in this life and in the afterlife. We must not only attend to assisting our children in becoming financially and socially set, but spiritually set as well.

Youth in the study reported that they **did not realize that there was a life track** until they reached adolescence. Yet, as a school counsellor, I can tell you that most school educators are able to predict a child's future behaviour by observing his or her behaviour up to grade 5 or 6. Those young people who are going to stay on a particular track have already proven it by this age. Thus, the responsibility of putting our kids on the right track comes back on us, the parents. It is quite unusual for a young person who is not on track to come back on track without some sort of intervention.

2. Keeping our youth on track

a) Helping youth distinguish between Panjabi ethnic script and Sikh religious script.

Often our youth are turned off of Sikh culture because they observe within their community unequal treatment of girls and boys; discrimination based on caste - especially when it comes to marriage arrangements; excessive drinking and physical abuse of spouses and children. Sikh youth need to be taught that these are not elements of Sikh culture - the Gurus infact denounced these aspects of Indian society. In counselling university students, it is my observation that the young people most likely to reject their ethnic background were those who observed their parents participating in such discriminatory behaviour.

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b) Helping our youth be strong enough to stay on track

Staying on track is associated with the clarity of the track. Our children must be clear about what they need to do to stay on the spiritual track and how they are to stay on track when they are confronted with differing values and ideologies from both the Panjabi script and the Dominant Canadian Culture script.

- it is **not only the larger Canadian society which can undermine a child's desire to maintain Sikhism** - but other Panjabis who are not practicing Sikhism as well. **For example** - young men in my study reported how a young man with a Joora was often called Giani by others. Altough a Giani is a person to be revered in Sikhism, in this sense the term is often derogatory. If we hear this term being used in our extended family situations or in other contexts - it is important that we correct the individual using it.

- give children knowledge about Sikhism - at a young age, teach them to read and write Panjabi - as a parent I know that it takes a lot of effort to make time but recognize that reading and writing Panjabi will give your children direct access to Sikhism rather than relying on someone else's translation. If you personally don't have knowledge to answer the questions raised by your children, find someone in the community who is able to or buy your children material which helps them answer their questions.

- youth in this study reported tha **participating in athletics** increased the ability to stay on track. Thus, it is importa to encourage our children to participate school based and out of school athletics other hobbies so that they gain a sense self esteem in various areas.

3) Helping youth reconstruct their life track so they choose to retain elements of Sikh religion.

Quote: Feeling torn (Hardip, a 17 year old says)

I know whether I can judge right from wrong. And, I have a feeling like that He's (referring to God) is looking down on us. And so it influences me to a high degree I'd say, when I like think of the Sikh religion. I don't keep my hair, keep my beard, certain aspects like just being in Canada. It's just like to be integrated into the lifestyle that we're in, that we have to take this physical persona. Whereas, at the same time I wanna feel accepted, but I wanna be somewhat religious.

In reconstructing their life track, youth are dealing with three inter-related processes of being guided versus doing it alone, belonging while avoiding exclusion and managing visibility.

a) **Those youth who felt guided** in reconstructing their life track when they confronted incongruencies between the Panjabi ethnic script, Sikh religious script and the dominant culture script,

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- **reported high levels** of mental and physical well-being, including contentment with life, congruence between who they were on the inside and who they were on the outside, greater self confidence, and greater sense of direction in life.

- **Young people who did not feel guided** reported feelings of loneliness, confusion, stress, and lack of direction in life, as well as incongruencies between who they were on the inside and who they were on the outside. Some of these later young men gave examples of those who were dealing with issues of drugs and alcohol, truancy from school, getting into fights with others, as well as difficulties with the law.

Youth indicated that guidance was an essential part of developing a strong sense of identity. Parental guidance was considered most significant although older siblings or friends could supplement whatever adolescents are getting from their parents. It is important that parents realize the integral role they play in their childrens' lives. ❑

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Punjabis forgetting Punjabi!

*CONTRIBUTED**

There are many Punjabi words that were used in older times, but stand almost extinct today. The words in Punjabi like '*tarkalan*' (evening), '*deeva-batti vela*' (evening time), '*khou pio vela*' (time of having meal), 'taap' (fever), 'jhagga' (one's attire), have been lost as present generation is indifferent towards their meanings.

"The language which is one of the widely spoken languages in the world, used in more than 100 countries, is not respected in its own state," Surjit Singh Patar, who has written umpteen numbers of poems and is a recipient of Padma Shri, tells Hindustan Times.

The newspaper had commissioned an article to look into the status of the Punjabi language in current day scenario on the occasion of **International Mother Language Day on Feb 21.**

The language is facing serious challenges, the newspaper reporter found out.

"ਮਰ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ ਮੇਰੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਸ਼ਬਦ, ਵਾਕ ਵਾਕ ।"

"*Mar rahi hai meri bhasha shabd shabd, vak vak*' (my language is dying, word by word, sentence by sentence)," says Surjit Singh Patar.

The report quotes an anecdote given by Patar.

One of his acquaintances in Australia asked her daughter that she will get to learn Punjabi language once she is in Punjab, as everyone speaks Punjabi there. When they came here and a few months passed, the daughter asked her mother whether they were in Punjab or not, because most of the people here don't speak Punjabi anymore. "Such is the situation here that Punjabis are not speaking their own language. They feel embarrassed and prefer Hindi or English," says Patar.

Surjit Singh Patar, who has done his PhD in Punjabi literature, adds: "Irony is people outside the country miss the language and want their children to learn it, but we shy away from speaking it here."

In Malaysia, many parents struggle to teach their kids to speak in fluent Punjabi. Well, some parents themselves are not conversant in their mother tongue. But efforts are being made, at the community-level, to keep the language alive. For example, the Punjabi Education Trust Malaysia (PETM) is on the verge of opening up its 50th Punjabi Education

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Centre (PEC), a weekend language school.

Punjabi language seems to be thriving in Canada, for example. Here, it is now the third most spoken language.

One recent report in Canada noted that as the community has grown and its language has flourished, Punjabi has the become the preferred language of employment in this country. "Police, banks, businesses want to reach out to the fast growing Punjabi community, so they prefer to employ Punjabi-speaking people," it quoted one person.

Back to Punjab. The Hindustan Times article goes on:

In 2008, the Punjab government had enacted the Punjabi Language Act to ensure the mandatory teaching of Punjabi from Class 1 onwards in all schools of the state. But many institutes and schools in Punjab can be seen discouraging the Punjabi speaking students and asking them to speak in English. The students are charged fine if they speak in Punjabi, it is learnt.

"If the schools start issuing fines to the students speaking Punjabi, it's an insult to the language," says Patar.

Inactivate Language Department

The Language Department of Punjab is also lying torpid. Some of the districts like Jalandhar and Kapurthala among others do not even have district language officers and the works department is supposed to undertake, like organising activities related to Punjabi language in schools, are not being done.

When Hindustan Times tried to contact Gursharan Kaur, Director of Language Department, Punjab, she refused to talk.

Hope Still Alive

In the end, Surjit Singh Patar says, "We should not believe that this is the end. There is still some hope left."

"ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਬਚਾਣਗੇ ਗਾਇਕ, ਲੇਖਕ, ਵਿਦਿਅਕ ਸੰਸਥਾਨ। ਸਬ ਦੇ ਮਰਨ ਦੇ ਬਾਅਦ ਹੀ ਮਰੇਗੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ।"

"*Isnu bachaange gayak, lekhak, vidyak sansthan. Sabde maran de baad hi maregi bhasha*" (singers, writers and educational institutes will save Punjabi. The language will perish only after everyone dies), added Patar. ❑

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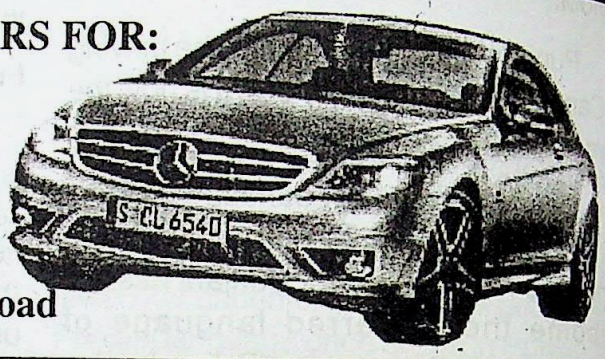
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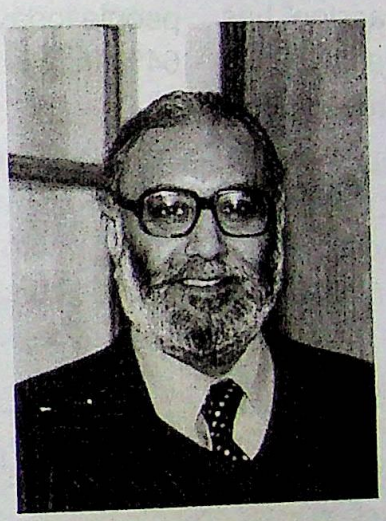
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Truth is Stranger than Fiction!

Dr.Abdus-Salam : Pakistan's first Nobel Laureate in Physics

*SARAN SINGH, IAS (Retd.)**

It was the year 1940, when young Abdus-Salam passed the Punjab University Matriculation Examination from his home Town High School in Jhang, West Punjab (of the Heer-Ranjha fame) with record marks, 760 (out of 850) breaking all previous records.



Far away in NWFP, I appeared for the same examination - as a student of Khalsa High School, Peshawar and stood first in the Province, with 714 marks – also a record for the Province.

While Abdus Salam joined the premier Government College, Lahore, I joined the Forman Christian College also in Lahore. He pursued the Science stream and – on graduation, went on to study physics at Cambridge University.

Dr.Abdus-Salam won the Nobel Prize for Physics, while I joined the I.A.S receiving record marks, in the 1947 (First) Competitive Exam, eventually to become Secretary to Govt. of India – the highest position available to Civil Services.

Long afterward, while serving in New Delhi, I received a call from the Pakistan High Commission inviting me to a reception in honour of Dr.Abdus Salam who had been awarded The Nobel Prize for Physics. Thus it was that I met my friend again - as a Nobel Laureate at The Oberoi Intercontinental Hotel, New Delhi – circa 1980.

That was more than three decades ago. Sadly, Dr. Salam passed away – in 1996.

Post Script: Dr. Abdus-Salam belonged to the Ahmadiya community in Islam. After the initial enthusiasm, the Government of Pakistan shunned him! In consequence, he used the prize funds to set up a Laboratory in Switzerland for research in Physics aimed at promoting human welfare. ❑

*Editor - The Sikh Review.

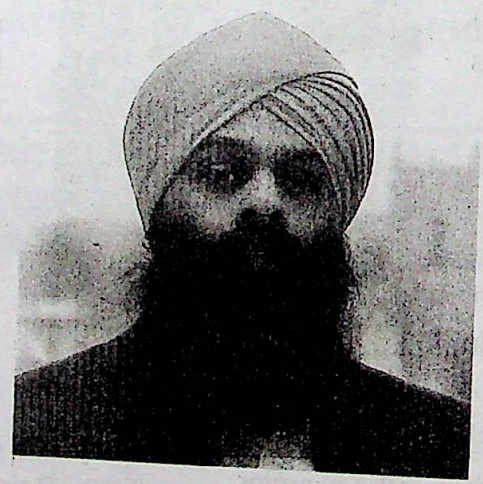
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The Sikh 'Mark Zuckerberg' supports the sick and vulnerable

*CONTRIBUTED**

Jyotveer Singh, a 35-year-old turbaned computer programmer from West London, has been dubbed the Sikh Mark Zuckerberg after his "Facebook for compassion" has been connecting people to take care of each other.



Communities across Britain and beyond are uniting on the 'AnonCare' App to support the sick and vulnerable. Support is being made available 24 hours a day, 7 day a week across the globe for those who, as result of a health condition, loss of a job, death of a loved one or some other reason are left feeling lonely and isolated.

Through AnonCare, vulnerable people are able to anonymously share concerns and issues, allowing a global community to respond and uplift them. As well as 'liking' posts, members can also 'wish well' or 'offer a prayer' immediately notifying the user of compassionate interactions. With so many communities on board , the average response time is 10 minutes which is fantastic news considering 84% of British people today say they have felt lonely and 64% know someone is lonely.

A recent user analysis highlighted that 100% of AnonCare users felt uplifted by another member, 94% feel the technology has helped improving their mood and 82% feel it has contributed to improving their overall wellbeing. AnonCare users benefited so much that 94% would recommend it to a friend or family member.

Whilst most care providers focused on complex and often controversial telehealth technology a new faith inspired App has been developed to help reduce over reliance on healthcare services by creating more inter-dependency within the global community.

*Courtesy: SikiNet.com

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Jyotveer Singh, Founder of AnonCare , said, "My Sikh faith informs me that we are all one large family and if someone is sick, it is our joint duty to take care of them.

"The NHS see over 1 million patients every 36 hours and at the same time volunteers from the Golden Temple (India) are serving over 1.5 million free meals. I feel people of faith and none, good people, have the motivation and desire to help others, without expectation."

In the year to September 2015, there were 779,786 referrals made by GPs to independent providers for outpatient care. AnonCare is designed to assist the NHS through active referrals to the global community, who provide emotional assistance to those in need.

An AnonCare user commented that AnonCare is "a compassion network changing social interaction. Beats Facebook in terms of purpose and matches it in functionality."

Jyotveer Singh said: "It is fantastic to see when the UK sleeps, another country is awake and available to provide support. A global family united to selflessly serve others."

AnonCare can be accessed at www.anoncare.com or available to download on Google Play and the Apple App Store. ❑

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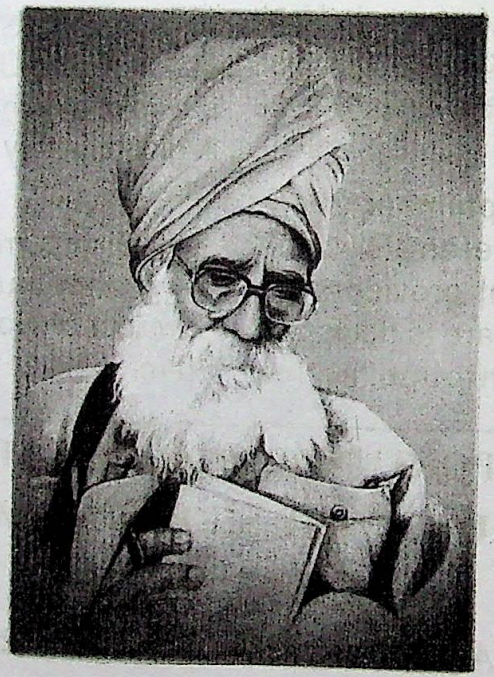
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Bhagat Puran Singh: Compassion Personified

*AMRIT KAUR SABHARWAL**

BhagatPuran Singh was born on 4th June, 1904 to Mata Mehtab Kaur and LalaShibumal in a village called Rajewal in Distt. Ludhiana, India.



During my childhood, I have had the good fortune of spending time in Bhagat Puran SInghji's company. Bhagatji and my father Sardar Mehtab Singh Ji had great affinity for each other. They shared a common set of values and were deeply religious. I can vividly recall, Bhagatji would come to our house in a tonga (horse driven carriage), wearing a saffron turban, white kurta pajama and wooden sandals. He used to tie a bell around his waist to announce his arrival. Bhagatji would distribute pamphlets which carried his views on subjects close to his heart such as preservation of the environment, tree plantation, ideal life of a student and above all thoughts on gurbani.

I am blessed to have a treasure gifted to me by Bhagatji. On one of his visits to my house, he presented me with an English translation of Sri Japji Sahib with a beautiful hand written message. His gift always reminds me of my responsibility of bringing up my children inculcating in them love for the gurbani and imbibing a Sikh way of life.

Bhagat Puran Singhji had his seeds of virtue sown by his mother during his early days. His mother was a very pious lady who mouldedBhagatji's young mind to uphold values which she deeply cherished. She taught him to live a selfless life serving others. As they walked along the road, his mother made him to pick up stones, nails (metal pieces) from the road. This way they would protect people and animals from getting injured and also taught him humility which is the essence of all virtues.

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Bhagatji's mother made him give grain in charity to anybody who came knocking on their door for alms. This practice helped instill compassion in his young mind. She also ingrained in him the love and care for animals and the environment. As a child Bhagatji used to feed animals, take care of them, plant trees and such noble deeds got etched and left an indelible mark on his impressionable mind.

The making of Bhagat Puran Singhji

Ramji's father Shibumal was a money lender by profession. He had lent huge sums of money to villagers. However, he was a very compassionate man at heart. During one year when the village was hit by a drought, he purchased essential food grains with whatever little cash he had in hand and distributed it generously amongst the villagers who were in sheer distress. During the troubled times, those who were under his debt had no means of repaying his loans. It was then when his benevolence spurred up and he told the villagers that "give me the money when you have it or else give it up in the name of a God".

As years passed by, Shibumal himself was drowned in poverty. Neverthless, Ramji's mother, Mata Mehta Kaur, was determined to not compromise with his education. She decided to admit him in a hostel. The family was going through financial stress and the circumstances compelled Ramji mother to work as a house maid for a paltry sum of Rs 10/- per month. She used to travel a long distance every day and on some days when did not have enough money to buy train ticket to her final destination, she would walk half the way. His mother had played a very important role in his life. From his early days she instilled two important virtues in him. She told him never to hurt anyone's heart. She also advised him never to ask his step brothers for his share in their father's property. She struggled hard to educate and bring him up. Once he was a young man, she told him that she has finished with her responsibilities and now he must stand up on his own feet and face the world.

With time Ramji grew up. Once while he was returning home, he came across a gurudwara where the evening prayer "rehraas sahib" was being recited. The bhaiji the gurudwara offered him langar (dal, chapattis, kheer, ghee and shaker). Besides the satisfying meal, he was also offered to spend the night in the gurudwara premises for nothing in return. The attitude and kindheartedness of the bhaiji touched his soul. He got interested in the practice and found out that most people were doing voluntary service. The gained insight that the gurudwara not only fed the hungry but also provided shelter to people irrespective

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of class and caste. Thereafter, Ramji started visiting the gurudwara often as he realized that this was a place where he could fulfill his aspirations and dream of serving mankind. This was a turning point in his life. Born in a Hindu family he adopted Sikhism in his youth and got christened to be renamed as Puran Singh. It was later that GianiKartar Singh ji, a renowned scholar, bestowed him with the title of 'Bhagat' and this way Ramji got transformed to Bhagat Puran Singhji.

Bhagatji was deeply saddened when his mother passed away due to an incurable illness in 1930. It took him some time to recover emotionally from this loss and regain control of himself as he was very attached to his mother. She played a pivotal role in his upbringing and setting up his value system.

In the year 1934, a spastic child who was barely four years old, was deserted by his father at the door steps of a farmer. The abandoned child had earlier lost his mother. People from the neighbourhood Gurdwaras and hospitals fed the child in turns but no one offered to take him under their care permanently. Pure sympathy and compassion was not enough for the child to live. The helpless child desperately needed a caretaker on a permanent basis. The child soon fell ill and then the unseen hand of God came to his rescue. Singh Sahib Jathendar Achhar Singhji came forward and requested Bhagat Sahib to take the child under his care. Bhagat Sahib gladly accepted the child and named him 'Piara Singh'. Bhagat Sahib's back was Piara Singh's resting place. Thus came into existence 'PINGALWARA' – a home for the terminally sick, physically challenged and those abandoned by their family and society. Through selfless service and boundless love, Bhagat sahib helped the inmates of Pingalwara cope with the trials and tribulations of their life.

Bhagat sahib had divine blessings which supported his philanthropic activities towards humanity. His wisdom and humanitarian bent of mind was developed through learning that he gained out of real life experiences and not books alone. He was awarded the PADMA SHRI which he surrendered in the wake of the army attack on Shri HARMANDIR SAHIB. Bhagat sahib's two important messages for society were:

1. Plant eco friendly trees such as NEEM and PIPAL
2. Every living being should be accorded dignity in death. Nobody should die lying on the road side uncared and unattended.

Bhagat sahib left for his heavenly abode on 5thAugust. 1992. He continues to live in the hearts of many.

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'INSPIRATION'

An Education Motivational Programme

*ARSHDEEP KAUR**

The Sikh Forum Kolkata – a socio-religious organization – founded in 1957, has been engaged in several activities to inculcate gurmat values among Sikh students of all age groups. Besides, gurmat values the organization is also providing moral and fiscal support to needy Sikh students in their academic career. Realizing, that the education is the most pressing need of the hour - in the year 2015, the organization decided to start an Educational Motivational Programme with the sole objective to motivate the Sikh students 'in particular' of Class VIII above to achieve better results in their respective academic standard.



This year's Inspiration session held on 30th April, 2017 at Uttam Mancha, Kolkata, in which around 200 students has participated from different Sikh and non-Sikh institutions of Kolkata.

The eminent speakers, who motivated the students were - Mr. Charanpreet Singh, CEO of AIM Education and Associate Dean of Praxis Business School Joka, Sardar Karan Singh, Marketing Manager - Radio Mirchi of Times Group, Sardar Amarjit Singh, Deputy Manager of ICICI Bank, Sardar A P Singh, Chartered accountant by profes-sion, and also the representatives from JIS Group, Roy Institute of Competitive Examination (RICE) and The Chopra's, the study abroad consultants in Kolkata.

In a three hours inspirational session, professional motivators / speakers of various renowned Career building institutions - not only delivered their speeches on educational related matters,

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but effectively addressed the students queries on various technical issues that the students may have encounter during their studies or at the time of preparation for examination.

Interestingly, some students raised very pertinent questions, which 'somewhat' were common to others students as well – like how to make progress in a particular subject that they may be finding difficult to understand or how to overcome stress before examination etc..

Besides students, parents, teachers and members of Schools too have made their presence felt by raising educational related queries.

Though all the speakers 'effectively' dealt with the student's queries, but the two young speakers Sardar Karan Singh and Amarjeet Singh seem to have left a greater impact on students' mind because they spoke of their own experiences – as a student and also in their respective career building.

While addressing the students, Sardar A P Singh and C P Singh, shared their huge expereinces - as a successfull professional in their respective field - and provided them with useful tips to explore successful path in their chosen stream.

In this programme, every year '**CHARDIKALA AWARD**' is being given to the students of outstanding performance in the field of education and sports. This year's Chardikala Award winners were – Harkrish Singh, a student of class VIII, with extraordinary command in History of Graduation level and Ranjot Singh, who represent West Bengal - in under-19 cricket team and have bagged many awards.

The session concluded with a vote of thanks and a wish of bright academic and professional career of all the participant STUDENTS. ❑

Dear Writers / Readers,

As you must have observed, we are already having E-mail addresses : sikhreview@vsnl.com & sikhreview@gmail.com. We will appreciate if you send your articles through E-mail.

We are also happy to inform that "**THE SIKH REVIEW**" can be visited on internet at : **http://www.sikhreview.org**

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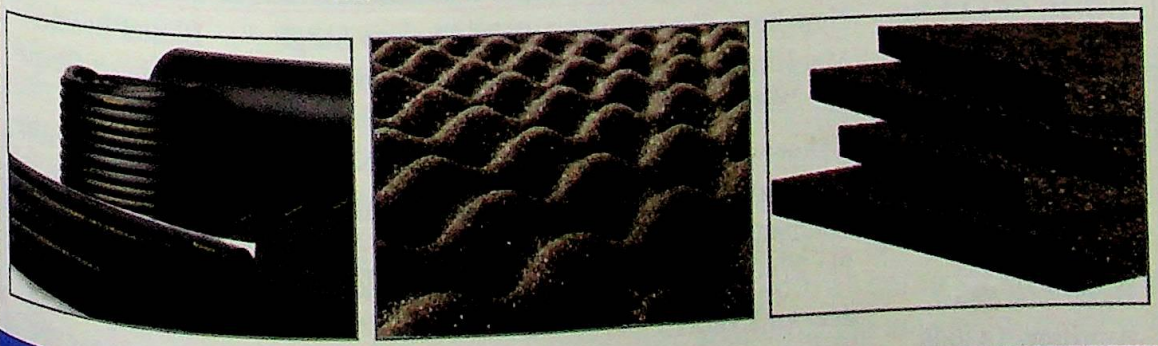


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An Ode to Respected Sardar Jaspal Singh Ji

*Achint Kaur**

With profound grief and a deep sense of sorrow, we received news of the untimely demise of our beloved Sardar Jaspal Singh Ji. Born on 12th March 1945 at Jarawalan, District Lyallpur, Pakistan, did his schooling from DPS, Mathura Road New Delhi and Engineering from Delhi College of Engineering, he bid us adieu to join God's heavenly abode, on 7th May, 2017, leaving behind an unmatched persona with his Life being a testimony of his exceptional accomplishments.



Son of Sardar Mehtab Singh Ji and Sardarni Jasbeer Kaur Ji, he not only carried on their philanthropic and spiritual legacy, (which taught us that with diligence, sincerity, values and goodness for all, you can at any age, build an empire), but he expanded and outshone the value laden rich legacy, beyond all frontiers, leaving the world more beautiful and enriched. As we endeavour to tread their path, may God give us the strength, so that we live up to their name.

Saying that We Miss Him, does not do justice to what we feel, since with Sardar Jaspal Singh Ji's departure a vacuum has been created which no-one can fill. With his powerful presence, he was a Pillar, a cementing force, not only for the entire family but the entire '*kaum*' and society at large. A source of Strength, an Ocean of Love, he taught All, that relations, care and warmth is greater than anything material and hence need to be continuously nurtured. Accepting people as they are, he touched a chord with All Ages, being a Gem, True Friend, Guide, Teacher, perfect son, Protector, a Loving Parent, Devoted Husband, a dutiful Brother and Head of the Family. His hand protected and shielded All. Being an avid reader, Sardar Jaspal Singh Ji taught us that, we should Always be willing to learn since only a Good Student can be a Good Teacher. He walked an extra mile to reach out to others. One to whom all came for advice, support and solutions. He was a go-getter with his

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zest for life and never - give - in attitude, a true inspiration for All. His balanced views, progressive thoughts, positive approach to life, ever smiling and helping hand, yet being an epitome of humility - All are irreplaceable.

Following his motto 'ignite and awaken souls, he led the Sikh Panth as President of the Chief Khalsa Diwan and a Board member of Takht Sri Patna Sahib, however he not only preached but also tread the path, of understanding each word of religion rather than blindly following it. His way of celebrating, was the entire family melodiously singing kirtan together, welcoming the dawn of New Year and Gurpurab. Revering Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, as 'Jeevan Jaanch da Khazana', he was not only a meticulous bearer of traditional standards, but also taught us to reason stating, only that which stands the test of rationality can survive for posterity. He inspired innumerable lives with his foresight and principles.

Sardar Jaspal Singh Ji believed in giving back to society. Service to Humanity was ingrained in children as a Way of Life. Under his able guidance and leadership as Chairman, Guru Nanak Fifth Centenary School (GNFCS) has been moulded into an institution which is an embodiment of values and celebrates the culture of excellence. This year GNFCS has been ranked among the Top 5 Residential Schools in the Country. With his message to students, "Dare to Dream, Learn to Excel", Sardar Jaspal Singh Ji was not only a great educationist and a visionary who strongly believed that education alone empowers a nation. He understood that children require, not only world class professional education and facilities but also, balanced co-curricular activities alongside spiritual growth, to prepare them to face Life and excel in all spheres as global citizens. While mentoring students, he differentiated between wisdom and education and taught that true Education makes a person, above all 'a Good Human Being'.

While leading both GNFCS as well as the expansive business empire under the aegis of Hindustan Refrigeration, he Always kept in mind the one's in need, those who couldn't afford but were talented, he not only gave them free and affordable world class education but also jobs. It is this humanity of his which sets him apart from all leading entrepreneurs of the world.

To say that we All Will Miss Him Forever is an understatement, while mourning his bereavement, we celebrate and salute his life, so rich and meaningful as he left his mark along the path he has tread. His fragrance and seeds sown, his legacy and ideals by which he lived, will shine forever like a beacon in the sky, illuminating the path of Generations.

"Kinne hi Gullaan Nu Mehka Gaye, Apni Rooh de Chaannre de Naal'. □

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Hard work and motivation as hallmarks of success: The story of a Sikh family of Kashmir

*JAIBANS SINGH**

The world has become a global village where cross-cultural integration is an all-encompassing norm; all those who aspire to make the world their professional stage are fully aware that they would face herculean problems of adjustment. They stoically make necessary effort to adjust into the cultural melt pot.

The youth of Jammu and Kashmir need to realize that there are no shortcuts in this process, they simply have to run the course and the sooner they learn to do so the better. They are educated, able-bodied, intelligent and capable of putting in long hours of work under very modest working and living conditions. With such accomplishments, they have everything going for them in national and international job markets.

The Kashmir Valley has a reservoir of stories of motivated and hard working families that have attained success and glory in the face of daunting odds. These families should serve as a role model to bring a message of hope for the Kashmiri youth amidst an environment of despondency and pessimism being spread by certain inimical forces that have a vested interest in keeping the region in a perpetual state of backwardness.

Amarjeet Singh Mehta was a young Sikh boy hailing from Village Shogapura, Budgam, Kashmir when the Pakistan sponsored a tribal invasion of Jammu and Kashmir took place in 1947. At that stage, he was a student at Amar Singh College, Srinagar, in his second year of the graduate course. He was witness to the loot, plunder, and atrocities committed by Pakistani mercenaries.

The landing of Indian forces at Srinagar airport on 27 October 1947 was looked upon by him and his fellow villagers as a divine blessing to deliver the people from the evil foreign powers intent upon subjugating them.

The Indian forces had to join battle with the foreign tribal marauders from the vicinity of the airport itself. The task of neutralizing such a large number of mercenaries was daunting and full of challenges. The first set of troops (1 Sikh and 4 Kumaon) that landed in Dakota aircraft at Srinagar airfield with great difficulty were provided information

*Courtesy: Lt. Gen. PS Mehta [Email:psmskinners@yahoo.com]

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and assistance by the locals, which proved to be an advantageous game changer in the challenging situation.

Young Amarjeet was in the forefront of providing assistance. He worked as a guide for 4 Kumaon and was witness to the bravery of Major Som Nath Sharma, Param Vir Chakra (Posthumous) and his courageous troops in what is known as the Battle of Budgam. It is notable that Major Som Nath Sharma embraced a hero's death in Shogapura, the village of Amarjeet Mehta.

Amarjeet was so impressed by the Army that he decided to join the force and serve his nation. This was not an easy task since there was nobody to guide him in his village and even the capital city of Srinagar. His commitment to his professional dream and the hard work that he put into realizing the same bore fruit when he got selected for training at the Officers Training Academy, Pune and went on to join the Artillery Regiment of the Indian Army in 1952.

He, thus, became the first Sikh officer from the Kashmir Valley to be commissioned into the Indian Army. He maintained roots with his land by marrying Harbans Kaur of Village Singhpura, Baramulla. He retired from the Army as a Lt. Colonel after commanding an Artillery Regiment and putting in 31 years of meritorious service.

Lt. Col Amarjeet Singh Mehta, on retirement, went to get back to his roots in Jammu and Kashmir. He could not go back to Srinagar due to the scourge of terrorism, and as such he chose to stay in Udhampur where he built a house and dedicated himself to social work.

The saga of this family's commitment to the cause of the state as well nation did not end here.

Presently Lt. General Pradeep Singh Mehta, the second son of Lt. Col. Amarjeet Singh is serving the Indian Army. He has the distinction of being the first Sikh officer of Jammu and Kashmir to attain the rank of Lieutenant General.

Pradeep Singh Mehta did his graduation from the low profile Government Degree College, Udhampur and was selected for the Short Service Commission (SSC) in September 1978. He passed out with the Sword of Honour and first in order of Merit from Officers Training Academy, Chennai and joined the Skinners Horse, which is the senior most Armoured Regiment of the Indian Army.

Lt. Gen. Pradeep Singh Mehta has recently culminated his command of a prestigious Strike Corps and holds a very important appointment in New Delhi.

It was only with hard work, dedication, commitment and perseverance that he was able to maintain a consistent career profile to attain the highest selection rank in the Indian Army.

Here is a family that did not need the assistance of Article 370, the much coveted State Subject or any other such

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facility to fulfill its dream of service to the nation. They lived as proud Kashmiri's and proud Sikh citizens of the Indian Nation and went on to attain the pinnacle of success and achievement.

In fact, the biggest factor behind their success is that they did not look for any assistance from the state. They only put their complete faith in Indian democracy and the Indian system while maintaining the highest spirit of nationalism.

If Pradeep Singh Mehta could go from a college in Undampur to an Officers Training Academy located in Chennai, the southern tip of India and pass out the top of his course, then all other young people of Kashmir can do the same.

They have to realize that those who are instigating them to place redundant ideologies and perceived misgivings above hard work and perseverance are their actual enemies.

There are many like the Mehta Sikhs of Kashmir who have broken the shackles of ignorance and self-pity to forge ahead. It is up to the youth of Kashmir to emulate them rather than getting swayed by the propagandist, self-serving localized politics. ❑

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Sri Harimandir Sahib

*CHRIS MOONEY SINGH**

An upside-down-ness in the pool,
the Golden Temple doubly noble
takes a long bath when it is cool.

The gold sun also bathes its face.
Some nights the moon comes down as well.
Celestial bodies know this place.

Fattened carp in their nibbling school
swim for their supper clientele
and bathers seek healing in the pool.

The tank is lit with porthole light.
Treading the marble thousands swell
to the Poem House where we recite.

Pink kite, face down, I see you've given
your soggy heart. Can I, too, dwell
with you upon the waves of heaven?

* *Email : chris@wordforward.org*

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Sikh Role Model Directory

Sir,

I'm pleased to inform all of you that with great efforts of a local Sikh organization " Kes Sambhal Prachar Sanstha" a unique Sikh role model Directory has been published. It contains 500 Sikhs from all over the Globe in every sphere of the life. It is very well edited and published which gives such good information about Sikh Icons. Commendable efforts has been made by S. S.J.S.Pal retd. Chief Income Tax officer (India) who is founder of the organization. It will be a very good table book and will inspire Sikh Children. The address of the organization is V-239, Rajouri Garden, New delhi- 27.(email id- wahgurusjsp@gmail.com)

In this directory you will be astonished to read the bio data of persons and their unique performance whom you had not heard earlier. I enclose just one of Sardar Tarvinder Singh Sabharwal of Mumbai (Page-46,entry -56) which for me is also an eye opener. I'm happy about my profile also which is (entry no. 280 on Page 161.)

I recommend this as it will be a mini Encyclopedia of the Sikh personalities. I thank Dr.Pal and his colleagues.

Sr. Tarlochan Singh
Email:tarlochan@tarlochansingh.com

★★★★★★

3 March 1947: The real story of Master Tara Singh

Dear Sir,

In response to the article "The Importance of March 3, 1947 in the Sikh History" published in March 2017 issue of The Sikh Review, and to put the matter straight, I am herewith submitting another version of the story for the knowledge of the readers as well as scholars - excerpted from the Biography of the great Sikh leader **"Master Tara Singh Jeewan Sangharsh Te Udesh"** written by his son Sardar Jaswant Singh, as below:

During Freedom movement the Muslim League began a civil disobedience agitation when it appeared certain that India would be partitioned. The agitation succeeded with the help of police and a section of British officers who wanted to prolong the British Rule in India. Sir Khizar Hayat had to resign, in place of his Unionist party Muslim League was expected to form the Government in Punjab. Muslims were very happy but the Sikhs and Hindus were dejected. On March 2, 1947 Sir Khizar Hayat sent his resignation to the Governor. On March 3, 1947 MLA's of Punjab elected on Panthic ticket gathered at the residence of Minister Sardar Swaran Singh. It was clear Partition was inevitable. "The main fear was if Muslim League formed the government in Punjab, it was very likely that the British may transfer whole of Punjab to Pakistan. If the British did decide to bifurcate Punjab, our worry was how to take

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control of our half under Muslim League rule since the police was also Muslim dominated." The Sikh members decided to oppose the formation of Muslim League Government. After taking the decision everybody went to the Punjab Assembly Hall. Some Sikhs members and Master Tara Singh were present when it was unanimously decided to oppose the government of Muslim League. Some suggested to start opposing in the evening since there was a Muslim mob outside the Assembly and there was a chance of them attacking. Master Tara Singh resolved that was the moment to lift the spirits of Sikhs and Hindus. Without any further consultations he asked everyone present to go out with him and started shouting slogan of Pakistan Murdabad from inside the Assembly Hall. When they came out, the Muslim mob advanced towards them.

There was a possibility of a clash. There were 24 people with Master Tara Singh and about the same number of Sikhs and Hindus nearby joined them on hearing the slogans. The Muslims were in thousands. The Muslim mob came near them but the Sikhs and Hindus did not get scared. A Muslim gentleman Mian Iftikhaar Deen came that way and diverted to Muslim mob away from them. With no one to hear them, it was natural for them to stop raising Pakistan Murdabad slogan. This incident lifted the spirits of the Sikhs and Hindus. Master ji was carrying a Kirpan at that time and the story that spread was of Master Tara Singh pulling out his Kirpan and tearing the Muslim League flag! He issued a clarification in the newspaper next day but unfortunately, people did not pay attention to it.

The reality is there was no flag there and neither did Masterji pull out his Kirpan, there was no reason for it. That night the Sikhs and Hindus held a huge 'jalsa' at Kapurthala House where tens of thousands of people gathered. The people who felt demoralised because they saw the fall of Sir Khizar Hayat's government as their defeat, buoyed up. They saw new hope in raising the slogan of Pakistan Murdabad by a handful of Sikhs and Hindus in front of a huge Muslim mob. Young college students were energised by the incident. The whole day groups of young boys kept moving around the city shouting slogans. The meeting at Kapurthala House that night added to the excitement where Master Tara Singh was a speaker.

Stray incidents of violence began. Most of the attacks by Muslims were in Pothohar region. The reason being Muslim police supporting the attackers, encouraging them and policemen shouting slogans in favour of Pakistan. They were supported by some British officers. When rioting spread, the British tried to control it but it got out of hand. Communal tensions in East Punjab heightened. Punjab police was Muslim dominated and had backing of the British.

To sum up, Master Ji was a great Sikh leader and the whole nation is indebted to

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him for his extraordinary contribution in Freedom movement and the Sikhs - in particular - have great respect for his matchless leadership qualities.

Sdn. Kiran Jot Kaur
[Granddaughter of Master Tara Singh]
Email: kksgpc@gmail.com

★★★★★★

Sikhs of Shivnagar, Vaishali

Dear Sr.Jagmohan Singh Gill ji,

Happy to read your well researched Article on Sikhs of Shivnagar,Vaishali (Bihar) in March 2017 issue of "The Sikh Review".

In fact your earlier contribution on the subject covering some other Sikh settlement in remote area of Bihar's other districts has been equally very impressive. You have done yeoman job in mapping of Sikh settlement ,their love of Sikhi, their educational standard and financial status being poor farming community which have been neglected by main stream community members perhaps due to lack of any authentic data/information on the issue. Our heartiest congratulation for this most dedicated and time consuming exercise.

We at The Sikh Forum, New Delhi wish to take up the matter with DSGMC for getting support for following :-

a. Positioning of Punjabi teacher for teaching Gurmukhi language, basic information on Sikh History,Kirtan by Bi-lingual Ragee Jathas on rotational basis, seasoned-qualified bi-lingual Katha kars.

We are not aware how much support you have been able to get from SGPC, Amritsar on the subject till date. You may like to share same to be on page while talking to DSGMC President.

With full details now available with you, I would request you to send us following information in order to initiating most needed course of action at Delhi in the larger interest of our community members living in Bihar:-

1. Name of villages having Sikh settlement, distance from District Hqs.

2. Population of Sikhs in each village/ small town etc.,general educational qualification, profession in addition to being small land farming

3. Do they have assess to Punjabi/Gurmukhi language , education level ,profession skill. What nature of assistance is expected from Delhi.

4. You being in charge of Organisation looking after interest of Bihar Sikhs, what support is being provided after due deliberation & wha more is desired.

I seek your assistance in our common cause as soon as possible . This shall enable us t take up proposal with authorities accordingly

Warm Regards

Partap Singh, DIG (Retd
Secretary General, The Sikh Forur
Email:partapsingh011@gmail.cor

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॥ ੴ ਅਕਾਲ ਸਹਾਇ ॥

THE SIKH FORUM, KOLKATA

THE SIKH WELFARE ASSOCIATION, KOLKATA

Registration No - S/2L/23705 of 2014-15

The Sikh Forum Kolkata, has long been dedicated to the noble cause of rekindle the spirit of SIKHISM amongst Sikh students and to help them to lead a Gurmat inspired Sikh way of life as enshrined in Guru Granth Sahib Ji by organizing the following activities through out the year.



Sunday Classes



Bhai Mardana Inter School
Gurbani Gayen Competition



Sohni Dastaar Muqabla



INSPIRATION
An Education Motivational programme



Lecture Competition



Gurmat Sikhya Camp

Encouraged by the tremendous response and the overwhelming spirit and momentum, the above activities have inspired us to carry forward the same. Therefore we request you to kindly extend your full co-operation to this Panthic cause and help us to train our Boys & Girls to emerge as true citizens of the Universe and to be able to serve the society.

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The 1984 "GENOCIDE" 'Press Release'

The Sikh Forum expresses deep distressover the statement made by the Union Defence Minister, Arun Jaitley on 18 April 2017, that the motion passed by the legislative assembly of Canada's Ontario province was "unreal and exaggerated."

The Sikh Forum asks as to what was "unreal" about that motion? Is it not a fact that thousands of Sikhs were brutally massacred in 1984 in the first ever incident of targeted violence against a community in independent India?

Is it not true that the R.K.Ahooja Committee set up by the Government to ascertain the number of the dead had put the figure at 2733 of those killed in Delhi alone in 1984, not including those in other parts of the country including Kanpur, Bihar and Haryana ?

Is it not true that some 50 officers and men of the Indian Armed Forces (in uniform) were killed because they were Sikhs?

Is it not true that the Union Home Minister, Rajnath Singh had at a public meeting on 26 Dec. 2014 publicly pronounced the 1984 violence as a "genocide".

It is deplorable that rulers remain in a state of denial about what happened in the country - over four consecutive days from 31 October to 3 November, 1984?

Then what is "unreal" about Canada's Ontario Legislative Assembly "recognising" the gruesome targeted violence against the Sikh community as "genocide"?

If India believes in secular democratic values then it should have been the first to acknowledge the violence against the Sikh community in 1984 as a "national disgrace." That could have partly brought some closure to the victims of 1984, the government has xacerbated the situation when it described the motion by the Ontario province as "unreal."

This is regrettable - in so far as it shows the BJP stand as insincere, using tragedy as a political electoral ploy to targets the Congress to win Sikh votes!

To make these very insensitive and arrogant statements to a visiting senior Minister from a 'friendly country' is particularly unbecoming of a mature Government.

Pushpinder Singh Chopra , President
Partap Singh, DIG (Retd.)
Secretary General
The Sikh Forum, New Delhi

★★★★★★

National Sikh Campaign Launches 'We Are Sikhs'

[National Effort Aims to Inform Americans about Sikhism and Sikh Turban]

The National Sikh Campaign (NSC) has launched We Are Sikhs - an initiative to improve awareness of the Sikh religion and Sikh Americans nationally and in local communities throughout the United States. This was unveiled on April 14 on CNN as the Sikh community in the United States was

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celebrating Vaisakhi, an auspicious occasion celebrating the Sikh identity. 30 second ad was run on CNN and on social media. It also intends to run similar ad on FOX. In addition, it unveiled a state of the website, www.WeareSikhs.org.

Through a major marketing, grassroots and public relations effort, We Are Sikhs will focus on increasing the Sikh American community's presence in national and local news outlets, online platforms and within their neighborhoods. The initiative will utilize national and local television and cable advertisements, digital advertisements, an innovative website and social channels and community events to affect change.

"We are very proud to launch We Are Sikhs, a national effort to help inform our fellow Americans about who we are and why we are proud to wear the turban, a symbol of our community's commitment to equality and serving others," said Dr. Rajwant Singh, co-founder and senior advisor of the National Sikh Campaign. "Sikh Americans are pillars of their communities in every corner of our nation and we must work to proactively meet and connect with our neighbors."

For this unprecedented PR work for Sikhs, NSC had engaged AKPD, President Obama's media team and Hart Research Associates, which does strategy work for the World Bank, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Harvard University. In addition, it has hired FP1 Strategies, a conservative and Republican leaning marketing team which has done strategy work for President Bush's 2000 and 2004 campaign and it has done marketing for Facebook and Ford Motor Company. President Bill Clinton's speech writer planned and edited the content of the website WeareSikhs.org. NSC held fundraising events in 14 cities to garner support from the community and the total cost of this campaign is expected to be $1.3 Million.

The Sikh community has been the target of discrimination, intimidation, harassment and hate crimes since the 9/11 Attacks largely because of a collective misunderstanding of what the turban means in the Sikh faith. Sikhs wear the turban to show their willingness to serve others in the community and their commitment to equality for all people. 99% of individuals wearing turbans in the U.S. are of the Sikh faith.

"Sikh values are American values, and Sikh Americans have been making positive and significant contributions to American life for more than a century. We run local businesses, sing our national anthem with pride, serve on local Parent Teacher Associations and lead Boy Scout Troops," said Gurwin Singh Ahuja, co-founder and executive director of the National Sikh Campaign. "We welcome the opportunity to share our values of equality, diversity and service through We Are Sikhs. The American dream is fundamental to our identity here in America, and we believe deeply in the freedom to pursue one's own success through hard work."

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Despite these many contributions, 60% of Americans admit to knowing nothing at all about Sikh Americans, and 66% of Americans have never interacted with a Sikh American before. While this lack of awareness and interaction exists, the National Sikh Campaign believes there is enormous potential to enhance positive feelings and familiarity toward Sikh Americans through this effort.

The National Sikh Campaign (NSC) is a non-profit organization dedicated to educating the public about the many contributions Sikh Americans are making in their communities every day. Whether it's serving multiple tours overseas, leading Fortune 500 companies, managing family farms, serving as elected officials or promoting equality and serving the local community, Sikhs put into action the values that make America great.

NSC's mission is to ensure that more Americans can immediately recognize and understand who Sikh Americans are, what their faith is all about and how it shapes their significant contributions to American life.

Courtesy: sikhcampaign.org
Contact: press@sikhcampaign.org

★★★★★★

The Government of Karnataka contributing in celebrations of 350th year of Guru Gobind Singh Ji

It is for the first time that a grant has been made from the Karnataka Budget to the minority Sikh Community which has a population of less than one lakh. The allocation of Rs.5 crore has been specifically made for celebration of the 350th year of Guru Gobind Singh Ji which will mainly be used to set up a cultural centre at Bidar, from where Bhai Sahib Singh ji, one of the Panj Pyaras of Guru Gobind Singh ji hails.

Bidar is also associated with Mata Bhag kaur ji. Historically, earlier, Guru Nanak Dev ji had also blessed Bidar with Nanak Jheera during his visit between 1510 and 1514. This proposed cultural centre will be an added attraction for the Sikh Community visiting Hazur Sahib in Nanded, which is about 160 kms away. Further, the State Government has also allocated Rs. 10 lakh each for renovation of Gurudwaras in Karnataka.

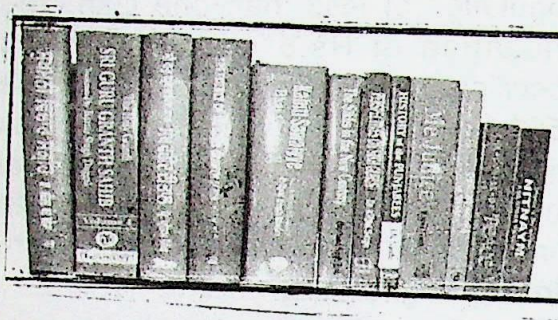
The credit of this maiden effort goes to newly appointed member of the Karnataka State Minorities Commission, Sardar Baljeet Singh. His knowledge of Kannada, in depth understanding of the local culture, dedication and commitment to the cause, and persistence helped to convince the Chief Minister, Minority Minister, Principal Secretary of Minority Welfare and the Chairman of Minorities Commission for Government of Karnataka to contribute in this important event of 350th year of Guru Gobind Singh Ji..

Courtesy: Sardar Baljeet Singh [Member Karnataka State Minorities Commission]

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Book Review

For review in ***The Sikh Review*** writers/publishers need to send two copies

Sukhmani Sahib, The Jewel of Bliss, Vols.I & II
By. Prof. Beant Singh
Publisher : Vishav Gurmat Roohani Mission Charitable Trust, Gurdwara Ishar Parkash, Ratwara Sahib, Dist. Mohali, Punjab)
Price : Rs.500/-(Set)

A Review By Dr. Balkar Singh*

The foundation of Sikhism is 'bani' and its propagation and dissemination is Sikh activism. The Sikh faith, awareness and memory are dyed in it in such a manner that the Satguru (true and Perfect holy Preceptor), through his grace, gets any task he wishes, accomplished by his Gursikh. A Sikh does not regard his failure as that of the Guru but attributes his achievements to the Guru's boundless grace. In this context, this is how Guru Ram Das Ji guides us and shows us the path:

'Holy Master ! to you is known
into what states were we fallen.
Rolling in dust were we, regarded by none
– By association with the holy Preceptor,
The Master, were exalted worms as we.'
[SGGS: 167]

This sentiment has kept Gursikhs, making great achievements, as gentle and humble. Though this kind of conduct and behaviour started with our forefathers like Baba Budha Ji, in the living presence of the Guru Sahibaan itself, it has been continuing since then in one form or the other. It was under the guidance of the Guru Sahibaan that the Sikh-method of Divine Name meditation was adopted to imbue spiritual activism in man's blood and genes. Its living and powerful source has always been and shall ever continue to be Sri Guru Granth Sahib. Under the guidance of the 'Shabad-Guru', that is, Sri Guru Granth Sahib,

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whatever spiritual endeavours were made from time to time, they established their sway and gained acceptance and approval in their contemporaneous times. That is why, even erosions and corrosions which confronted Sikh identity, could not weaken Sikhism ; and Sikh memory has preserved this million-dollar feeling of Sikh pride in words such as these – 'O Panth, echoes of thy greatness shall reverberate from day to day' and 'May the Panth prosper even if I do suffer ; this is my great desire.' Associated with one layer or aspect of this Sikh sentiment should be regarded Prof. Beant Singh's book written with a feeling of devotion and prayer.

This book has two parts. In pages 14 to 27 in the first part, Sant Lakhbir Singh Ji, Dr.Rattan Singh Jaggi and Justice Pritam Pal (Former Lok Ayukta, Haryana), while introducing the book, have asserted that, embracing 'bani'. Prof. Beant Singh has successfully tried to take it to the seekers. The Sikh-desire to make the intellectual idiom commensurate with the spiritual has been manifested in all those books on 'Nit-nem banis' (Gurbani compositions prescribed for daily reading/recitation), which Prof.Beant Singh has already written with the intense longing of bringing them within the reach of the English-knowing readers of the world. As an enlightened Sikh, he knows that, like many other communities, Sikh community too has become a global brotherhood. In this multi-cultural space, Sikh psyche has acquired many colours which have to fight continuously a cultural cold war. In order to emerge triumphant in this cold war, Sikhism shall have to turn to its roots. In order to manifest this need as 'Back to Bani' call, the Sikh community shall have to be aligned with Gurbani in some way or the other. It is right and proper that the Sikh generation which is getting distanced from its mother-tongue on whatsoever excuse, must not be allowed to go away from 'bani'. For this purpose, it has become imperative that, to the coming generations of Sikhs, 'bani' should be conveyed in the language and idiom which is taking the place of their mother-tongue. Transcending the local parameters, the Panjab of today has become global and as a result, it has become aligned with multi-lingual needs. Through Hindi and English, Prof. Beant Singh has tried in this book to convey 'bani' to the needy readers. The method and practice of going to the needy has been continuing since the time of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, and Sikhs have been employing it in some form or the other. We should try to understand and appreciate this book in the continuity of this tradition.

In Sri Guru Granth Sahib, the manner in which a spontaneous fusion of human psyche's primal freshness and intense awareness of divinity has been revealed, is not to be found in any other scripture. There is no scope here to go into its details. However, in this vein, the Sikh academicism of building a Sikh critique has yet to emerge. But with endeavours like the present book, a step has undoubtedly been taken in this

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direction. If we try to corroborate it with reference to this book, it will become rather lengthy because, of the longer 'banis' (compositions) recorded in Sri Guru Granth Sahib, the manner in which the title of this composition has defined it and made it famous, that is not so in the case of other compositions, such as 'Jap Ji Sahib', 'Asa Di Var', 'Sidh Gosht' and 'Anand Sahib'. For example, in the very first stanza of octate I of this Divine song of peace, the wonderful conduct of sentient beings engaged in Divine Name contemplation has made it into a 'bani' (composition) of transforming virtues :

'God's Name immortalizing,
Of nectarine joy is the bestower :
Lodged is it in the heart of His
Worshippers. Pause.'

The same thought finds expression in the last octate (24/8). In Sikh spirituality, this calm activism of inherent virtues has been given the name of 'Sukhmani' (Jewel of Bliss):

'Destroyed are man's fears and
illusions, sufferings and afflictions.
Called is he saint
and pure become his actions.
Highest of all shall be his glory.
Saith Nanak : For all these merits,
is this 'bani' called 'Sukhmani (Jewel of Bliss).'

In the world of Sikh faith, there is a long history of achievements and attainments made through 'Sukhmani Sahib', and in future too, they shall continue to be made. Along with this, Gursikh lovers of 'bani' have been building narratives commensurate with their respective ages and in the light of 'Sukhmani Sahib', have been creating the required understanding too. To intensify this process, the manner in which Sikhs have been using 'Sukhmani Sahib' in congregational form, it has helped in forging Sikh understanding. [In that sphere are fashioned Absorption, Wisdom, Enlightenment of Mind. (Jap Ji Sahib, stanza 36)] The book under review can play an important role in this regard. What is needed is to take books written in the manner and with the objective of the present book to the common Sikhs who have become alienated from book-culture. We can advance in this direction by holding dialogues and discussions about the imperative need of reading books on Gurbani. A prominent Sikh institution like the Vishav Gurmat Roohani Mission Charitable Trust, Ratwara Sahib (Dist. Mohali) is associated with the publication of this book, and through it can be started a movement for spreading book culture. All parties associated with this book deserve to be congratulated because through such books, we can advance towards the Sikh note of a believer's rational understanding. It is only by reading a book that one can profit from it. Time spent in the company of such books aligns man with the feeling that the Guru is ever present with him. How one feels while going through this experience can be known only by reading the book. The service that Prof. Beant Singh has rendered by keeping his face towards the Guru deserves all praise. ❑

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CONTENTS

MEDITATION	Rejoice! For God has Blessed us with Life Giving Rain! *Shabad Gurbahi*		5
GUEST EDITORIAL	The Healing Power of Naam	Dr. Jasjit Singh Walia	6
THEOLOGY	A Sikh Prayer - offered with Humility	Swami Swaroopananda	9
PHILOSOPHY	Poonar Janam - Life after Death in Sikhism	Dr. R.S. Bhalla	11
MORAL TRADITION	"Sarbat da Bhalla" Humanism at its Noblest!	Saran Singh, I.A.S. (Retd.)	17
	Guru Nanak's Views about War and Violence	Prin. Sawan Singh Gogia	21
HISTORY	Baba Banda Singh Bahadur: The Warrior and the naming of Barapulla Flyover	Partap Singh, DIG (Retd.)	27
	The Prelude to The Partition: 1947 An Untold Story of Bravery, Honour and Tragedy	Bhupinder Singh Fidoic	31
PERSPECTIVES	SIKHI: Creationism,Evolution and Related Matters [Part I]	Dr. I J Singh, (USA)	37
	Professor Harbans Singh: His contribution to - Sikh studies	Amandeep Kaur	46
HERITAGE	The Demand for Return of Koh-E-Noor	Balbir Singh Bhasin	53
	Who Really Owns the Koh-E-Noor Diamond	Gurcharan Singh Kulim	55
PANORAMA	Academic Freedom, the Sikh Chairs: Anne Murphy's Thesis	Dr. Sukhmander Singh	60
CANDID COMMENT	The Giani and the Sea of Changes	K C Singh	65
YOUTH SECTION	Hardit Singh Malik, The Original 'Flying Sikh'	Surabhi Nijhawan	69
POET'S CORNER	"Friends"	Swapan Seth	73
READERS' FORUM	Letters to Editor		74
DIARY	Synopsis of Notable Events		77
BOOKS	The Divine Way of Living By Dr. Jasjit Singh Walia	Reviewed by Katherine Faust	81
	"ANMOL SAKHIAN" (Punjabi) - by Jasbir Kaur	S S	

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Rejoice! For God has Blessed us with Life Giving Rain!

ਤੁਖਾਰੀ ਛੰਤ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ਬਾਰਹ ਮਾਹਾ ੧ੴ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥

ਸਾਵਣਿ ਸਰਸ ਮਨਾ ਘਣ ਵਰਸਹਿ ਰੁਤਿ ਆਏ ॥
ਮੈ ਮਨਿ ਤਨਿ ਸਹੁ ਭਾਵੈ ਪਿਰ ਪਰਦੇਸਿ ਸਿਧਾਏ ॥
ਪਿਰੁ ਘਰਿ ਨਹੀ ਆਵੈ ਮਰੀਐ ਹਾਵੈ ਦਾਮਨਿ ਚਮਕਿ ਡਰਾਏ ॥
ਸੇਜ ਇਕੇਲੀ ਖਰੀ ਦੁਹੇਲੀ ਮਰਣੁ ਭਇਆ ਦੁਖੁ ਮਾਏ ॥
ਹਰਿ ਬਿਨੁ ਨੀਦ ਭੂਖ ਕਹੁ ਕੈਸੀ ਕਾਪੜੁ ਤਨਿ ਨ ਸੁਖਾਵਏ ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਸਾ ਸੋਹਾਗ਼ਣਿ ਕੰਤੀ ਪਿਰ ਕੈ ਅੰਕਿ ਸਮਾਵਏ

[SGGS: 1108]

Translation*

Sawan is the month for rejoicing.
It is the season when Dark Clouds Pour.
I long for my Beloved - by my Lord is far away!
My Lord being away, I suffer pangs of Separation.
The Lightning flashes and frightens!
Alone in my BED I grieve -
The pain is Insuffer-able, O my Mother!
Leave aside Sleep or Hunger.
I can't even stand clothes at home.
Says Nanak, only that Bride is Happy
Who is united with her Spouse - the Lord.

*Tr. by. KS Duggal's "GURUVAK": The Word Divine.
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The Healing Power of Naam

*Dr. Jasjit Singh Walia**

Gurbani is God's own powerful treasure house of truthful, ethical, moral, social and spiritual virtues and values. These are as fresh and valid today as they were when originally revealed to our Guru's as God's own Word centuries ago. This theme is beautifully illustrated by the hymns below:

ਸਚੁ ਵੇਖਣਾ ਸਚੁ ਬੋਲਣਾ ਸਚਾ ਸਭੁ ਆਕਾਰੁ ॥
[SGGS: 565]

See Truth speak Truth, the whole creation is of Truth.

ਜੀਆ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਸਮਾਈ ਰਹਿਓ ਨਿਰਾਲਮੁ ਰਾਇਆ ॥
[SGGS: 1038]

In a mysterious way God exists in all beings, but stays detached.

The supreme lofty wisdom embodied in Gurbani, is described as "Naam", and it is admirably presented throughout the Sikh holy scripture, Siri Guru Granth Sahib. Its universal appeal makes it ideally suitable for people all over the world, regardless of color, creed, gender or nationality. It is no wonder that Dorothy Field in her book "Religion of Sikhs", 1914 edition, p 10 writes, " a reading of the Granth Sahib strongly suggests that Sikhism should be regarded as a new and separate world religion... The religion is also one, which should appeal to occidental (western) mind. If judged from pragmatical (practical) standpoint in some quarters, it would rank almost first in the world". Indeed, it contains seeds of serenity, tranquility and peace (STP for life) because the hymns in SGGS are always fully alive with Divine Light.

Naam is a blessing, which we must earnestly seek so that it can be our constant guide, eternal purifier and liberator in conformity with the following hymns:

ਬਿਨਉ ਕਰਉ ਕਰ ਜੋੜਿ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਦੇਹੁ ॥
[SGGS: 497]

With folded hands we appeal before Thee, Oh God, bless us Thy Naam.

ਮੈ ਕਿਆ ਮਾਗਉ ਕਿਛੁ ਥਿਰੁ ਨ ਰਹਾਈ ਹਰਿ ਦੀਜੈ ਨਾਮੁ ਪਿਆਰੀ ਜੀਉ ॥ [SGGS: 597]

What should I ask since nothing is permanent. Oh God, bless me Thy blessed (beloved) Name.

ਦੀਨੋ ਨਾਮੁ ਕੀਓ ਪਵਿਤੁ ॥ [SGGS: 892]

God has made us pure (through blessing) of His Naam.

ਨਿਰਮਲ ਨਾਮੁ ਜਪਹੁ ਸਦ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਕੀ ਗਤਿ ਤਾਹੀ ਜੀਉ ॥ [SGGS: 598]

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Utter the Name of the immaculate God and obey the Guru's instructions (teachings), then one's inner-self shall be liberated.

ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮੁ ਮਿਲੈ ਵਡਿਆਈ ਏਦੂ ਉਪਰਿ ਕਰਮੁ ਨਹੀ ॥
[SGGS: 903]

Nanak seeks the greatness of God's Naam, because there is no other religious deed superior to it.

When we serve and remember God with focused mind and attentive concentration, as through recitation and meditation of Naam Japna (ਨਾਮ ਜਪਨਾ), then our physical, mental and spiritual faculties are able to relax completely. Such a superb intellectual and inspirational mind-body exercise enables our human spirit to experience in a profoundly meaningful way an inward connection to the Divine. It is truly an uplifting and heart-felt inspiring feeling, which calms our mind. No wonder it has a soothing, tranquil, blissful and peaceful effect not only on our mind, body, spirit, but also on all other parts of our body and our psyche. One has only to try it to believe it, for one has nothing to lose but every thing to gain because one will feel more relaxed, less jittery, less angry, and more peaceful, more joyous, and happier.

From scientific point of view, contemplation, reflection and meditation have the intrinsic majestic power to trigger our inner engineering machinery, especially our lungs, heart and brain to send a coherent signal to the healthy and/or diseased cells to generate newer biologically potent substance(s). These can then effectively and completely destroy all the diseased cells. It is important to note that even small changes in a specific protein can initiate a newer, more efficacious therapeutic pathway and thus enhance its healing power. The curative power of Naam thus happens through elimination of all diseased cells.

Doesn't this now make sense to reflect, contemplate, and remember God's Naam day and night so that our whole body, especially our mind, heart, brain and lungs can all synchronize to produce maximum therapeutic effect? Herein then lies the magical formula of God's divinely sanctioned gift to help us lead, a 4H's of life, healthy, happy, holistic and holy life. Therefore, it leads us to the conclusion that we must seek most humbly blessing of God's Naam, key to the healing power, as is admirably reflected in the hymns below.

ਨਾਉ ਧਿਆਈਐ ਨਾਉ ਮੰਗੀਐ ਨਾਮੇ ਸਹਜਿ ਸਮਾਇ ॥
[SGGS: 26]

Meditate on God's Naam, pray for the blessing of Naam, and through Naam merge into supreme bliss.

ਨਾਨਕ ਲੇਹੁ ਮਿਲਾਇ ਮੈ ਜਾਚਿਕ ਦੀਜੈ ਨਾਮੁ ਹਰਿ ॥
[SGGS: 1422]

Make devotee Nanak meet Thee and bless God's Naam

No wonder, Gurbani repeatedly tells us that God's own revealed Word, has the supremely sublime curative and complete healing power for all kinds of illnesses. This theme is admirably expressed in the following hymns.

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ਸਰਬ ਰੋਗ ਕਾ ਅਉਖਦੁ ਨਾਮੁ ॥ [SGGS: 274]

God's Name is the panacea for all ailments (diseases).

ਏਕ ਆਸ ਰਾਖਹੁ ਮਨ ਮਾਹਿ ॥ ਸਰਬ ਰੋਗ ਨਾਨਕ ਮਿਟਿ ਜਾਹਿ ॥ [SGGS: 288]

Keep hope (on one God) in your mind, oh Nanak, (then) all diseases are erased (eliminated).

ਜਸੁ ਸਿਮਰਤ ਦੂਖੁ ਸਭੁ ਜਾਇ ॥ ਨਾਮੁ ਰਤਨੁ ਵਸੈ ਮਨਿ ਆਇ ॥ [SGGS: 192]

On remembering (God), the Naam jewel becomes alive in (our) mind (heart) and all illnesses disappear.

ਅਨਿਕ ਉਪਾਵੀ ਰੋਗੁ ਨ ਜਾਇ ॥ ਰੋਗੁ ਮਿਟੈ ਹਰਿ ਅਵਖਧੁ ਲਾਇ ॥ [SGGS: 288]

Illnesses, which are not cured by many remedies, are eliminated with the medicine of God's Name.

ਮਨਿ ਤਨਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਜਪਹੁ ਲਿਵ ਲਾਇ ॥ ਦੂਖੁ ਦਰਦੁ ਮਨ ਤੇ ਭਉ ਜਾਇ ॥ [SGGS: 293]

Repeat God's Name lovingly with focused mind and body, (then) all sufferings, pains and fear shall leave thy mind.

ਜਿਸੁ ਸਿਮਰਤ ਦੂਖੁ ਸਭੁ ਜਾਇ ॥ ਨਾਮੁ ਰਤਨੁ ਵਸੈ ਮਨਿ ਆਇ ॥ [SGGS: 192]

By remembering whom (God) all illnesses disappear, and the Naam jewel comes and resides in mind".

ਦੂਖੁ ਦਰਦੁ ਜਮੁ ਨੇੜਿ ਨ ਆਵੈ ॥ ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਜੋ ਹਰਿ ਗੁਨ ਗਾਵੈ ॥ [SGGS: 191]

"Suffering, pain, deaths courier do not come near (a person), who sings praises of God, says Nanak".

ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਮਾਵਨਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਇਹੁ ਧਨੁ ਸਾਰੁ ॥ [SGGS: 288]

Practice (the teachings) of God's, Creator's Name because this is the real wealth.

In essence, we should lovingly remember God's Name all the times so that the resulting divine vibrations of God's Grace, Mercy and Compassion can bring us serenity, tranquility, and peace of life. It is now clear, why we are reminded in SGGS over and over again to acquire the supreme wealth of God's Name within our present life. This way we can experience divine spirit moving both within and around us in a powerful but gentle way to bless us with bliss, peace and liberation here and hereafter as is illustrated by the hymns below.

ਅਨਦਿਨੁ ਨਾਮੁ ਰਵੈ ਦਿਨੁ ਰਾਤੀ ਮਿਲਿ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਮ ਸੁਖੁ ਹੋਈ ਹੇ ॥ [SGGS: 1045]

Day and night always utter God's Name, (then) meeting with your divine love thou shall acquire bliss.

ਜਿਨ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਨਿਧਾਨੁ ਹੈ ਤਿਨ ਕਾ ਭਉ ਸਭੁ ਗਵਾਇਸੀ ॥ [SGGS: 310]

God removes all the fear of those who have God's Name's treasure in their heart.

ਜਨ ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮੁ ਧਿਆਇ ਤੂ ਹਰਿ ਹਲਤਿ ਪਲਤਿ ਛਡਾਇਸੀ ॥ [SGGS: 310]

Oh devotee, Nanak, remember God's Name and God shall liberate thee here and hereafter.

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A Sikh Prayer, Offered With Humility

SWAMI SWAROOPANANDA*

A prayer is a submission. It is an offering in humility and complete surrender, expressing servitude and love. It is verily a whisper from the soul. It reaches out like the faith of a child who puts his hand into that of his parent and wills to be led. A prayer must 'know' the One Being prayed to. In whose hands are we placing ours? Whom do we trust to lead us?

Often our prayers and conversations with the Divine are request for something. Generally, our attention is focussed on defining what we want rather than in knowing the recipient of our prayers. This is akin to writing a long letter knowing neither the receiver nor his address.

More importantly, prayer has to be woven with the fabric of faith. In short, we need to know how to pray. And this we learn through a beautiful, spontaneous outpouring of Guru Arjan Dev, ਤੂ ਠਾਕੁਰੁ ਤੁਮ ਪਹਿ ਅਰਦਾਸਿ ॥ ਜੀਉ ਪਿੰਡੁ ਸਭੁ ਤੇਰੀ ਰਾਸਿ ॥ [SGGS: 268] which forms the last part of the fourth stanza of his famed composition, the Sukhmani Sahib.

Ardas means prayer, or prarthana. It is to connect with the Supreme. We pray in order to achieve through that Higher Power what we cannot achieve by ourselves, the limited beings we imagine ourselves to be.

Each of us is born with certain abilities and also with some limitations. We then become bound by these self-imposed concepts – like the thought, "I am the body." Prayer is the way to remove these misconceptions and their hold over us. It is the direct route to tap into the Higher Power.

When we forget the very source of all, then ego, pride and arrogance come into our lives and create a sense of separateness. From the sense of separateness arises a feeling of incompleteness, followed by desire and hatred; and from hatred are born all our sorrows.

When we remember that everything we have has come from the Divine, there will be no ego. Where there is no ego, there is no sorrow. Even at moments of crisis, we should rejoice at all our blessings.

When we remember God and offer our prayers from the innermost depths of our hearts, it is ardas. This is the best way to express our love for God. In this inspiring ardas, Guru Arjan Dev shows us how to pray.

Tu Thakur is a submission that is done after Worship and kirtan at the Gurudwara.

*Head of Chinmaya Mission *[Courtesy: Times of India, Kolkata "The Speaking Tree"]*

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The moment of ardas is also when we submit ourselves to the Divine, when after the earlier worship through ritual or chant, we prepare to unite with Him in surrender. This beautifully simple ardas constructs an inner environment with the bricks of prayer, gratitude and surrender, founded on the faith that He is the giver, provider, parent, and that we need work only as instruments do, with unconditional trust and devotion.

In the last line Guru Arjan Dev pays homage to Guru Nanak Devji and to the tradition of the Guru-parampara, through which the disciple acknowledge his indebtedness to his Guru and to the source of all wisdom – none other than the Master (Tuohakuru) acknowledged in the first line. ☐

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Poonar Janam - Life after Death in Sikhism

*Dr. R.S.Bhalla**

Almost all religions of the world are concerned about the mystery of life after death, Poonar Janam. However, in this short essay one finds references only to the Sikh religion. All the numbers used in the text refers to the page numbers in the Guru Granth Sahib.

Guru Granth Sahib sends a powerful message regarding life and death. Life and death are often mentioned in the same verse. Life is intrinsically associated with death -- one who takes birth is bound to die (ਜੋ ਉਪਜੈ ਸੋ ਕਾਲਿ ਸੰਘਾਰਿਆ ॥ - SGGS: 227) The time of death is fixed by God. No body knows the time of one's death; it is a mystery ਓਹ ਬੇਰਾ ਨਹ ਬੂਝੀਐ ਜਉ ਆਇ ਪਰੈ ਜਮ ਫੰਧੁ ॥-SGGS: 254) Only one thing that is certain about death is that it is bound to come. Human body has no control over death. - Body and soul enjoy each other's company in life until death parts them. Soul tells the body that is in under command of the Master and whenever He calls it is bound to go (ਧਨ ਕਹੈ ਤੂ ਵਸੁ ਮੈ ਨਾਲੇ ॥ ਪ੍ਰਿਅ ਸੁਖਵਾਸੀ ਬਾਲ ਗੁਪਾਲੇ ॥ ਤੁਝੈ ਬਿਨਾ ਹਉ ਕਿਤ ਹੀ ਨ ਲੇਖੈ ਵਚਨੁ ਦੇਹਿ ਛੋਡਿ ਨ ਜਾਸਾ ਹੇ ॥੩॥ ਪਰਿ ਕਹਿਆ ਹਉ ਹੁਕਮੀ ਬੰਦਾ ॥ ਓਹੁ ਭਾਰੋ ਠਾਕੁਰੁ ਜਿਸੁ ਕਾਣਿ ਨ ਛੰਦਾ ॥ ਜਿਚਰੁ ਰਾਖੈ ਤਿਚਰੁ ਤੁਮ ਸੰਗਿ ਰਹਣਾ ਜਾ ਸਦੇ ਤ ਊਠਿ ਸਿਧਾਸਾ ਹੇ ॥੮॥ - SGGS: 1073) This defines the relationship between the body and soul -- mind or consciousness and body.

Death comes to everyone irrespective of one's station in life whether humans or gods, no one can live permanently in the world. King, lords, poor beggars or rich are under the spell of death (ਰਾਣਾ ਰਾਉ ਨ ਕੋ ਰਹੈ ਰੰਗੁ ਨ ਤੁੰਗੁ ਫਕੀਰੁ ॥ - SGGS: 936). The world is a transitory station for the cycle of life and death (ਆਵਾ ਗਉਣੁ ਰਚਾਇ ਉਪਾਈ ਮੇਦਨੀ ॥ - SGGS: 1283) The journey of life starts and ends in death on Earth (ਜਨਮ ਮਰਨ ਕਉ ਇਹੁ ਜਗੁ ਬਪੁੜੋ ਇਨਿ ਦੂਜੈ ਭਗਤਿ ਵਿਸਾਰੀ ਜੀਉ ॥ - SGGS: 598) One feels proud of his wealth but at death one ceases to own anything, one leaves all the wealth (ਕਾਹੇ ਮਾਲੁ ਦਰਬੁ ਦੇਖਿ ਗਰਬਿ ਜਾਹਿ ॥ ਚਲਤੀ ਬਾਰ ਤੇਰੋ ਕਛੂ ਨਾਹਿ ॥ - SGGS: 1189) Possessions belong to one only so long as one is alive (ਸਭ ਕਿਛੁ ਜੀਵਤ ਕੋ ਬਿਵਹਾਰ ॥ - SGGS: 536)

Human soul is indestructible, it is immortal since it possesses the immortality character of God (ਮਰਣਹਾਰੁ ਇਹੁ ਜੀਅਰਾ ਨਾਹੀ ॥ - SGGS: 188) It is soul that comes and goes

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in the cycle of life and death (ਹੇ ਜਨਮ ਮਰਣ ਮੂਲੰ ਅਹੰਕਾਰੰ ਪਾਪਾਤਮਾ ॥ - SGGS: 1358) Human body is constituted out of five elements (ਪਾਂਚ ਤਤ ਕੋ ਤਨੁ ਰਚਿਓ ਜਾਨਹੁ ਚਤੁਰ ਸੁਜਾਨ ॥ -SGGS: 1427) ends with death. Death ends human body and not the soul and the elements that constitute human body mix with elements (ਮਾਟੀ ਮਾਟੀ ਹੋਈ ਏਕ ॥ - SGGS: 885) Human soul and God exist as one unity (ਆਤਮ ਮਹਿ ਰਾਮੁ ਰਾਮ ਮਹਿ ਆਤਮੁ ਚੀਨਸਿ ਗੁਰ ਬੀਚਾਰਾ ॥ - SGGS:1153) Human body is called the temple of God and in the body God lives (ਹਰਿ ਮੰਦਰੁ ਹਰਿ ਜੀਉ ਸਾਜਿਆ ਮੇਰੇ ਲਾਲ ਜੀਉ ਹਰਿ ਤਿਸੁ ਮਹਿ ਰਹਿਆ ਸਮਾਏ ਰਾਮ ॥- SGGS: 542) Its Godly character resides in its characteristics that it is neither old nor young, neither subject to death nor suffering, neither it vanishes nor comes to an end.(ਨਾ ਇਹੁ ਬੂਢਾ ਨਾ ਇਹੁ ਬਾਲਾ ॥ ਨਾ ਇਸੁ ਦੂਖੁ ਨਹੀ ਜਮ ਜਾਲਾ ॥ ਨਾ ਇਹੁ ਬਿਨਸੈ ਨਾ ਇਹੁ ਜਾਇ ॥ - SGGS: 868) Human soul is always in touch with God before human birth and after human death. Soul when it is corrupted by ego keeps on wandering and wanderings do not end so long as it does not realise its true nature (ਆਵਣੁ ਜਾਣਾ ਜੰਮਣੁ ਮਰਣਾ ਮਨਮੁਖਿ ਪਤਿ ਗਵਾਈ ॥ ਸਤਗੁਰੁ ਸੇਵਿ ਸਦਾ ਸੁਖੁ ਪਾਇਆ ਜੋਤੀ ਜੋਤਿ ਮਿਲਾਈ ॥ - SGGS: 31) and true nature is realised when it follows the Will of God (ਕਿਵ ਸਚਿਆਰਾ ਹੋਈਐ ਕਿਵ ਕੂੜੈ ਤੁਟੈ ਪਾਲਿ ॥ ਹੁਕਮਿ ਰਜਾਈ ਚਲਣਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਨਾਲਿ ॥ - SGGS: 1)

However, one does not leave the world empty handed, one takes with oneself all the deeds, karmas one performed in one's life. It is on these deeds one has to face God's justice, this is what God ordains (ਲਿਖਿਆ ਆਇਆ ਗੋਵਿੰਦ ਕਾ ਵਣਜਾਰਿਆ ਮਿਤ੍ਰਾ ਉਠਿ ਚਲੇ ਕਮਾਣਾ ਸਾਥਿ ॥ - SGGS: 78) God appoints Dharam Raj to record these deeds (ਲਿਖਿ ਨਵੈ ਧਰਮੁ ਬਹਾਲਿਆ ॥ - SGGS: 463) After the messenger of death takes one from the world, one is presented in the court of God where one is to give an account of one's deeds, all one's gains and losses are counted, that is, sins and virtues are listed. To call one in the court of God is the order of the judge of the court, that is, God (ਕਿਆ ਤੈ ਖਟਿਆ ਕਹਾ ਗਵਾਇਆ ॥ ਚਲਹੁ ਸਿਤਾਬ ਦੀਬਾਨਿ ਬੁਲਾਇਆ ॥ - SGGS: 792). What God puts in store for one, are one's deeds to judge one's conduct during one's stay in the world. One's deeds are the store house on which God makes judgement and decides the future course of action.

World is a transitory place for human beings, one comes into the world to take advantage of human life in search of ending the cycle of life and death. But by indulging in deviant activities one loses that chance and fails to take advantage of human life (ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਸੰਗਿ ਬਸਤੁ ਹੈ ਤੇਰੈ ਬਿਖਿਆ ਸਿਉ ਉਰਝਾਇਓ ॥ - SGGS: 1017) which is given to him to meet God (mil jaddess Milan kee baria-176) With every passing time life span is getting closer to its end; it is like a rope that the rat is cutting bit by bit, the rat of death is doing the same job (ਆਵ ਘਟੈ ਨਰੁ ਨਾ ਬੁਝੈ ਨਿਤਿ ਮੂਸਾ ਲਾਜੁ ਟੁਕਾਇ ॥ - SGGS: 41). When one thinks of death, generally one becomes

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philosophical. One asks the question that after leaving the world where one will go and whom one will meet hereafter. (ਸਭਨਾ ਮਰਣਾ ਆਇਆ ਵੇਛੋੜਾ ਸਭਨਾਹ ॥ - SGGS: 595) This points to the continuation of life after death. It also confirms the belief in the immortality of soul- when the swan, soul, will leave, body will be left behind like an abandoned woman (ਹੰਸੁ ਚਲਿਆ ਤੂੰ ਪਿਛੈ ਰਹੀਏਹਿ ਛੁਟੜਿ ਹੋਈਅਹਿ ਨਾਰੀ ॥ - SGGS: 155) The above discussion makes one curious to know that if life continues after death, how this continuity starts. The mystery of this continuity lies in the principle of karma. God possesses the secret of this mystery. God has revealed this mystery by announcing that as one sows, so one will reap (ਜੈਸਾ ਬੀਜੈ ਸੋ ਲੁਣੈ ਕਰਮ ਇਹੁ ਖੇਤੁ ॥ - SGGS: 706). What one does so one receives, what one sows so one eats. (ਜੈਸਾ ਕਰੇ ਸੁ ਤੈਸਾ ਪਾਵੈ ॥ -SGGS: 662). Therefore, what one gets is the result of what one has done. To decide the return for one's karma God assumes the role of Dharam Raj, King of justice (ਧਰਮ ਰਾਇ ਨੋ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਹੈ ਬਹਿ ਸਚਾ ਧਰਮੁ ਬੀਚਾਰਿ ॥ - SGGS: 38) In the court of God, God's authority is supreme without any challenge because there is no other who stands equal to Him. He himself is the sole authority. God's process and technique of judging is only known to Him. One's future birth depends on one's karma and is not influenced and affected by other factors such as caste, race or creed. liberation from death (ਸੋ ਨਿਗੁਰਾ ਜੋ ਮਰਿ ਮਰਿ ਜੰਮੈ ਨਿਗੁਰੇ ਆਵਣ ਜਾਵਣਿਆ ॥ - SGGS: 117) are not to be interpreted in isolation but in the spirit of the full context of the Bani. It is only then one will understand how the cycle of life and death can be stopped. Guru Granth Sahib is all about karmas and their excellence for the growth of an ideal person whereby one grows into a state of Barahm-consciousness

In the Sikh religion there is no concept of punishment. If one understands the principle of karma, what one sows that one gets, the idea of punishment becomes alien. God is always merciful and gracious towards everyone (ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਦਾਤਾ ਦਇਆਲੁ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਨੋ ਦਇਆ ਸਦਾ ਹੋਇ ॥ - SGGS: 302). God is a benign force and provides even food and shelter to those who are wicked (ਓਹੁ ਨਿਰਗੁਣੀਆਰੇ ਪਾਲਦਾ ਭਾਈ ਦੇਇ ਨਿਥਾਵੇ ਥਾਉ ॥ - SGGS: 640) If the idea of punishment is to be used, it is what one gets in one's birth after death due to one's previous karma (ਦਦੈ ਦੋਸੁ ਨ ਦੇਊ ਕਿਸੈ ਦੋਸੁ ਕਰੰਮਾ ਆਪਣਿਆ ॥ - SGGS: 433). One's life after death into a new form is not a punishment but it is an award for one's karma of previous life, poorab janam. Reincarnation one can regard as punishment since the life cycle is full of pains and sufferings (ਮਰਿ ਮਰਿ ਜੰਮਹਿ ਮਿਲੈ ਸਜਾਇ ॥ -SGGS: 1262) The cycle of life and death passes through 8.4 million species is a hell where one suffers like a fish out of water (ਨਰਕ ਕੂਪ ਮਹਿ ਗੋਤੇ ਖਾਵੈ ਜਿਉ ਜਲ ਤੇ ਬਾਹਰਿ ਮੀਨਾ ਹੇ ॥ - SGGS: 1028). It is stated in the Guru Granth sahib that God

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has created 8.4 million species or beings in the world (ਲਖ ਚਉਰਾਸੀਹ ਜੀਅ ਉਪਾਏ ॥- SGGS: 111). This is not to be understood as a mere idiom or a commonly held belief or a fear creating psychosis. Moreover, one should not understand this as a Hindu influence because in the Guru Granth Sahib all Hindu terminology is given specific and unique sense in which the existing terminology of Hinduism is altogether abandoned and the Hindus beliefs have been totally rejected. Most scholars who have spiritual knowledge and understanding agree with the 8.4 million creation of species and God's bounty available for them (ਲਖ ਚਉਰਾਸੀਹ ਜੀਅ ਉਪਾਏ ॥ਗਿਆਨੀ ਧਿਆਨੀ ਆਖਿ ਸੁਣਾਏ ॥ ਸਭਨਾ ਰਿਜਕੁ ਸਮਾਹੇ ਆਪੇ ਕੀਮਤਿ ਹੋਰ ਨ ਹੋਈ ਹੇ ॥੨॥ - SGGS:1044) Again, this spiritual utterances and revelations can be seen in the light of 4.2 million, that is half of 8.4 million, living in the water (ਬਇਆਲੀਸ ਲਖ ਜੀ ਜਲ ਮਹਿ ਹੋਤੇ ਬੀਠਲੁ ਭੈਲਾ ਕਾਇ ਕਰਉ ॥ - SGGS: 485) God's creation of 8.4 million of species does not fluctuate up and down (ਲਖ ਚਉਰਾਸੀਹ ਮੇਦਨੀ ਘਟੈ ਨ ਵਧੈ ਉਤਾਹਿ ॥ - SGGS: 936) Life is of numerous kinds, colours and moulds. Only few have the revealed knowledge of God's fashioning and to write the whole account will take volumes (ਜੀਅ ਜਾਤਿ ਰੰਗਾ ਕੇ ਨਾਵ ॥ ਸਭਨਾ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਵੁੜੀ ਕਲਾਮ ॥ ਏਹੁ ਲੇਖਾ ਲਿਖਿ ਜਾਣੈ ਕੋਇ ॥ ਲੇਖਾ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਕੇਤਾ ਹੋਇ ॥ - SGGS: 3) God created every body different from each other, it is God's ingenuity (ਕੋਇ ਨ ਕਿਸ ਹੀ ਜੇਹਾ ਉਪਾਇਆ ॥ - SGGS:1056) How God has done this, no one knows except God (ਜਿਨਿ ਉਪਾਏ ਸੋ ਬਿਧਿ ਜਾਣੈ ॥ -SGGS: 1060). God is a creator artist. However, in the whole scheme of creation of 8.4 million species, God has given prominence and dominance to human beings over other species. Human being has been made the master (ਮਾਣਸ ਕਉ ਪ੍ਰਭਿ ਦੀਈ ਵਡਿਆਈ ॥ . SGGS:1075) All other species are made subservient to human beings and their rein is placed in the hands of human beings on this earth (ਅਵਰ ਜੋਨਿ ਤੇਰੀ ਪਨਿਹਾਰੀ ॥ - SGGS: 374)

When one dies, what type of body one will get in one's next birth depends on one's karma. Karmas of a person never cease to exist unless one attains freedom from the cycle of life and death. So long as one is struggling in the cycle of life and death, it is called hell. Freedom from the cycle of life and death is called heaven, unity with God, and God-conscious person seeks for unity with Go (ਕਵਨੁ ਨਰਕੁ ਕਿਆ ਸੁਰਗੁ ਬਿਚਾਰਾ ਸੰਤਨ ਦੋਊ ਰਾਦੇ ॥ ਹਮ ਕਾਹੂ ਕੀ ਕਾਣਿ ਨ ਕਢਤੇ ਅਪਨੇ ਗੁਰ ਪਰਸਾਦੇ ॥ - SGGS: 969). After death God makes judgement over one's karma. One has to face God's judgment over one's karma. God makes judgement as to what type of life one is to be awarded to fit one's karma. Complete list of incarnations of soul cannot be given. However, Guru Granth Sahib cites some examples as to what type of life one will take as a result of specific karma. For example, those who do not follow the commands of

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God, that is, become manmukh, ego-centric, live a sinful life, take re-birth as a snake (ਚਿਤਿ ਨ ਆਇਓ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮੁ ਤਾ ਸਰਪ ਕੀ ਜੂਨਿ ਗਇਆ ॥ - SGGS: 70) Those who slander the saints get the life of a serpent (ਸੰਤਨ ਕੈ ਦੂਖਨਿ ਸਰਪ ਜੋਨਿ ਪਾਇ ॥ - SGGS: 279). One who thinks about wealth and dies in this worry, shall reincarnate as a snake again and again; one who thinks about woman and dies in this worry, shall reincarnate as a prostitute again and again; one who thinks about one's sons and dies in this worry, shall reincarnate as a swine again and again; one who thinks of one's house and dies in this worry, shall reincarnate as a ghost again and again; one who thinks of God and dies contemplating Him, shall be liberated from the cycle of life and death because God abides in one's heart (ਅੰਤਿ ਕਾਲਿ ਜੋ ਲਛਮੀ ਸਿਮਰੈ ਐਸੀ ਚਿੰਤਾ ਮਹਿ ਜੇ ਮਰੈ ॥ ਸਰਪ ਜੋਨਿ ਵਲਿ ਵਲਿ ਅਉਤਰੈ .... ਅੰਤਿ ਕਾਲਿ ਨਾਰਾਇਣੁ ਸਿੰਮਰੈ ਐਸੀ ਚਿੰਤਾ ਮਹਿ ਜੇ ਮਰੈ ॥ ਬਦਤਿ ਤਿਲੋਚਨੁ ਤੇ ਨਰ ਮੁਕਤਾ ਪੀਤੰਬਰੁ ਵਾ ਕੇ ਰਿਦੈ ਬਸੈ ॥ - SGGS: 526)

That is why Bani states that human life in invaluable, one should not let it go in vain, it is the time to end the cycle of life and death by leading virtuous life in the name of God (ਮਾਨਸ ਦੇਹ ਬਹੁਰਿ ਨਹ ਪਾਵੈ ਕਛੂ ਉਪਾਉ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਕਾ ਕਰੁ ਰੇ ॥ - SGGS: 220) If one does not get liberation from the cycle of life and death one wanders through many births (ਮਰਿ ਮਰਿ ਜਾਤੇ ਜਿਨ ਰਾਮੁ ਨ ਜਾਨਿਆ ॥ - SGGS: 327) It is in this sense human birth is regarded rare, one does not get human body again and again (ਕਬੀਰ ਮਾਨਸ ਜਨਮੁ ਦੁਲੰਭੁ ਹੈ ਹੋਇ ਨ ਬਾਰੈ ਬਾਰ ॥ - SGGS: 1366) One wanders through the life of worm, flying insects, elephant, fish, deer, bird, snake horse and yoked bull, etc. before getting a human body. Human body is an opportune time to get rid of this cycle (ਕਈ ਜਨਮ ਭਏ ਕੀਟ ਪਤੰਗਾ ॥ ਕਈ ਜਨਮ ਗਜ ਮੀਨ ਕੁਰੰਗਾ ॥ ਕਈ ਜਨਮ ਪੰਖੀ ਸਰਪ ਹੋਇਓ ॥ ਕਈ ਜਨਮ ਹੈਵਰ ਬ੍ਰਿਖ ਜੋਇਓ ॥੧.... ਮਿਲੁ ਜਗਦੀਸ ਮਿਲਨ ਕੀ ਬਰੀਆ ॥ - SGGS: 176) In the cycle of life and death, by getting human body one is given a chance to release soul from the bondage of life and death. If human soul is not liberated, it wanders through many lives before it takes again the human body.

During human life one should try to get rid of the cycle of life and death (ਮਾਨਸ ਦੇਹ ਬਹੁਰਿ ਨਹ ਪਾਵੈ ਕਛੂ ਉਪਾਉ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਕਾ ਕਰੁ ਰੇ ॥ - SGGS: 220) Human birth is rare because it comes after a myriad of births, there is no more birth as a human being for a long time. If after death there is no birth at all for the departed soul, everything becomes dust, the whole notion of transmigration of soul stands rejected. Again with the rejection of the notion of transmigration of soul, the theory of karma, that one gets what one sows, has no meaning. When the theory of karma will become worthless, the existence of God will be fruitless. Moral values like truth, justice, benevolence, etc. will lose all worth because everybody will live one's life according to one's self-interest. Law might force these virtues but there will be no

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human conscience to abide by these virtues. Pragmatic philosophy and Charvak philosophy of Brihaspati Sutra will guide human conduct.

Bani states that after death life continues in another form, but it may not be in human form. Bani even states that one's present relations -- of husband, wife, children, etc.-- are guided by karma of previous birth (ਮਾਤ ਪਿਤਾ ਬਨਿਤਾ ਸੁਤ ਬੰਧਪ ਇਸਟ ਮੀਤ ਅਰੁ ਭਾਈ ॥ ਪੂਰਬ ਜਨਮ ਕੇ ਮਿਲੇ ਸੰਜੋਗੀ ਅੰਤਹਿ ਕੋ ਨ ਸਹਾਈ ॥ - SGGS: 700). Life cycle does not come to end, unless one liberates oneself from the cycle. The mission of human life is to search for the true self, and true self is the personification of God (ਏਤੇ ਅਉਰਤ ਮਰਦਾ ਸਾਜੇ ਏ ਸਭ ਰੂਪ ਤੁਮ੍ਹਾਰੇ ॥ - SGGS: 1349) Human life has worth only if God is realised (ਭਈ ਪਰਾਪਤਿ ਮਾਨੁਖ ਦੇਹੁਰੀਆ ॥ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਮਿਲਣ ਕੀ ਇਹ ਤੇਰੀ ਬਰੀਆ ॥ - SGGS: 378). To take advantage of gaining God-consciousness in the human form and one should not waste this opportunity by acting like animals who have no aim except their physical existence (ਕੁਦਮ ਕਰੇ ਪਸੁ ਪੰਖੀਆ ਦਿਸੈ ਨਾਹੀ ਕਾਲੁ ॥ - SGGS: 43). Animal life's only aim is self-preservation, they are oblivion of any other goal during the course of their existence (ਇਹੁ ਬਾਬੀਹਾ ਪਸੂ ਹੈ ਇਸ ਨੋ ਬੂਝਣੁ ਨਾਹਿ ॥ - SGGS: 1283).

One stops the cycle of life and death only when one liberates oneself through grace which God showers when a person becomes gurmukh, saint or brahm-giani. Such a person is detached from the world while living in the world. It is like a lotus flower that remains in water but is untouched by the water; it is a life of virtuous living for the good of all beings (ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਸਦਾ ਨਿਰਲੇਪ ॥ ਜੈਸੇ ਜਲ ਮਹਿ ਕਮਲ ਅਲੇਪ ॥ - SGGS: 272). God's nature is transcendental, beyond and above all physical phenomena, where pain and pleasure, greed and avarice, the qualities of ego, cease to exist (ਸੁਖੁ ਦੁਖੁ ਜਿ ਪਰਸੈ ਨਹੀ ਲੋਭੁ ਮੋਹੁ ਅਭਿਮਾਨੁ ॥ ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਸੁਨੁ ਰੇ ਮਨ ਸੋ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਭਗਵਾਨ ॥ - SGGS: 1427). When a person attains this stage, one is liberated from the cycle of life and death. This is the stage where one becomes like God, that is one acquires the attributes of God. One does not become God but conducts the attributes of God. This is the destination of human living, the state of perfection, the meaning of life, merger in the universal spirit God.

God provides the soul with a succession of opportunities to realise its real self. If there is only one opportunity, when one takes birth as a human being, and that chance goes waste, the characteristics of God as loving being, generous, benign compassionate, infinite will lose all meaning. However, it is never too late to attain self realisation, God-consciousness. God is not a theoretical proposition to explain the origin of the world, God is Karta Purkh, conscious reality who control and administer this world.

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"Sarbat Da Bhalla": Humanism at its Noblest

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Arising from the altruist imperatives of history, the symbols of the Sikh faith were sanctified by Guru Gobind Singh Ji in the dramatic culmination of the Sikh ethos on the Vaisakhi Day, 1699. Those who argue, in levity or seriousness, that these symbols are a relic of the past, are only too willing to trade them for crass new fads and myths that are fickle and soon forgotten. The younger generation who question the relevance of the discipline of the symbols need only to develop the patience to reflect on their psychological and spiritual benefits – as an explicit uniting force.

When Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib gave his life for the fundamental right of worship, symbolised by the *Tilak* and sacred thread, it was intrinsically a universal act for all faiths and not for a particular people. The symbols of Sikhism spell faith and embrace the whole human race. Their message has meaning for all people everywhere. It is the magic of symbols that, despite their small numbers and 'minority' status, the Sikhs have evolved a sense of nation-hood and solidarity.

Much like the Buddhist exhortation *"Sangham Sharanam Gacchami"* the Sikh Theology preaches congregational participation and social activism as an endeavour in collective humanism and spiritual uplift:

ਸਤਸੰਗਤਿ ਮਿਲੈ ਤ ਦਿੜਤਾ ਆਵੈ ਹਰਿ ਰਾਮ ਨਾਮਿ ਨਿਸਤਾਰੇ ॥੩॥ [SGGS: 981]

The ethical principle in Guru Granth Sahib emphasizes the holiness of life: body is the temple of God, every human being has the right and duty to strive for self-realisation towards achieving this goal, the Guru suggests a specific code of conduct that *demands* protection – not penance or desecration – of the body including its crowning glory – the *Keshas* abstinence from deleterious drugs and intoxicants, austerity and early rising. *Amrit* is meant as the climatic benediction to the observance of the Code. It is the common bond of brotherhood in the service of humanity – a relationship that transcends distinctions of gender, caste, colour and social status. Too often we tend to fall into the trap of the present day media that religion is a strictly 'personal' matter: this in a country dotted with places of collective worship. In Guru Granth Sahib there are as many references and metaphors underlining man's relation

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with God that are plural, social and dynamic, as there are for the deliverance of the individual. In this commonality of purpose, mutual hostility and distances dissolve and disappear. Total awareness builds a sense of one-ness – of a world community for whom we daily pray: "ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮ ਚੜ੍ਹਦੀ ਕਲਾ ਤੇਰੇ ਭਾਣੇ ਸਰੱਬਤ ਦਾ ਭਲਾ ॥"

The tolerance and goodwill, for all is not weakness, but strength for fanatics of one faith or another it is foolish to think they are God's instruments of eliminating those who disagree with them. History is replete with the tragic consequences of fanatical intolerance, from medieval Crusades to the 1984 *Ghalughara*. Fire and brimstone are instruments of destructions. Love and goodwill are the perennial means of preservation.

But why are we so insecure and embattled? It is mainly because we do not *practice* the Code and discipline, also partly because we tend to use theological power and privilege as a political weapon. Instead of engaging in resolving philosophical issues, laying down moral guidelines, or interpreting spiritual values, the priestly fraternity has often been dragged into political controversies inherent in the working of historical shrines and gurdwaras. At the lower levels of town and village gurdwaras, the *Granthi* is among the lowest paid workers pitifully dependent on the charity and offerings of the devout members of the congregation. Ironically, the 'custodian' of 'Guru's Treasure of spiritual truths' is invariably a semi-literate and impecunious individual eking out a lack-lustre existence. In a vicious circle, the economic status and condition of the Granthi do not encourage the younger men (and women) to study Sikh Theology and Divinity as a subject, and indeed, to a degree, discourages the adoption of 'priesthood' as a profession. The contribution of *Taksals* in the past few decades has been the only silver lining. So also the endeavours of missionary colleges that continue to make a dent in the problem of *Prachar*. Finally, with all the affirmations of equality between men and women, we have a poor record in women's representation in the institutional set-up of Sikh Theology. Attitudes have to change and the anachronism of the male domination in theological institutions must be discarded along with the inhuman practice of female fate.

'REGRESSIVE' Fundamentalism?

Religious fundamentalism is a global phenomenon, relatively recent in origin. In the case of Sikh doctrine, it emerged as a conscious counterblast to what may be called the creeping permissiveness of modern society. Indiscipline, alcoholism, addiction to drugs and intoxicants, and apostasy triggered a reassertion of moral and spiritual values that has electrified the Theological scene. This reassertion of traditional religion is not a new implant coming from the intellectual centres of learning, but arises from the very soil of Sikh seminaries, or *Taksals*. This renaissance of religious faith and feeling was bound to have far - reaching social and political

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consequences. We are witness to these repercussions.

What is required is a reintegration of the human, moral and spiritual values inherent in the Sikh scripture and tradition. Equally important is the synthesis of the Sikh Theology with the scientific temper. A swing towards militancy, or confrontation with political power (which precipitates spiralling violence) would be fatal to the theological imperatives of Sikhism. We can neither dismantle the modern world nor desert it, or run away from it. What we can do is to rediscover the dynamics and everlasting doctrinal truths of Guru Granth Sahib towards a resurgent Sikhism- at home in the 21st Century.

Science & Theology

An eminent Sikh historian and author, who is never tired of proclaiming his agnosticism, recently wrote about his dialogue with His Holiness the Dalai Lama. He asked the spiritual head of Mahayana Buddhism what he thought of the origin of life on our planet. Did he subscribe to the intermediate theory put forward by Hinduism "and its *offshoots* – Jainism, Buddhism, Sikhism" – of order emerging from chaos by the intervention of Divinity in the form of a creator, preserves and destroyer? The learned questioner apparently did not care to recall what Guru Granth Sahib has to say about the origin of life on earth, quite *independent* of the mythological explanations offered by classical Hinduism:-

ਸਾਚੇ ਤੇ ਪਵਨਾ ਭਇਆ ਪਵਨੈ ਤੇ ਜਲੁ ਹੋਇ ॥ ਜਲ ਤੇ ਤ੍ਰਿਭਵਣੁ ਸਾਜਿਆ ਘਟਿ ਘਟਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਸਮੋਇ ॥ ਨਿਰਮਲੁ ਮੈਲਾ ਨਾ ਥੀਐ ਸਬਦਿ ਰਤੇ ਪਤਿ ਹੋਇ ॥੩॥

[SGGS: 19]

Indeed Sikhism is no "offshoot"; it is a sovereign religion *abignition*.

Far from accepting the prevailing theory of single heavenly Triumvirate: Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, Guru Nanak deeply reflected on the nature of the Universe. There is a clear refutation of the Creator – Preserver – Destroyer trinity in the following verses: ਅਸੰਖ ਨਾਵ ਅਸੰਖ ਥਾਵ ॥ ਅਗੰਮ ਅਗੰਮ ਅਸੰਖ ਲੋਅ ॥ ਅਸੰਖ ਕਹਹਿ ਸਿਰਿ ਭਾਰੁ ਹੋਇ ॥

[SGGS -Japuji - : 19]

Indeed, *Gurvani* is not in conflict with the scientific principle. It reflects upon the nature of Cosmos, the planetary system and origin of the earth. It goes beyond the *physical* aspect of the Universe – to the mysterious Fourth Dimension – The mind and consciousness. Sikhism does not have to defend itself *against* the expanding realm of science. *Gurvani* avers: these are immense spaces of the mind and spirit which remain a mystery. It will be many millena before material science can unravel it. It is significant that Guru Nanak (b. 1469) was a forerunner of Galileo (b- 1562). As one of the most extensively travelled leader of his time, Guru Nanak was fully aware of the physical aspects of the universe. What came to be known as the spirit of scientific enquiry is writ large in the Guru's writings.

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His pronouncement: ਤਾਰਾ ਚੜਿਆ ਲੰਮਾ ਕਿਉ ਨਦਰਿ ਨਿਹਾਲਿਆ ਰਾਮ ॥ ਸੇਵਕ ਪੂਰ ਕਰੰਮਾ ਸਤਿਗੁਰਿ ਸਬਦਿ ਦਿਖਾਲਿਆ ਰਾਮ ॥ [SGGS: 1110] is not a fanciful flight of imagination, but an explicit reference to the appearance, in the year 1531, of what later came to be known as Halley's Comet. It is the scientific spirit that gave the edge to the Guru's explanations of solar and lunar eclipsed, and other natural phenomena, as well as his gentle admonition to those who were struck with the paralysis of wuperstition relating to lunar days and solar seasons. The Sikh religion thus acquired enormous advantage over the preceding faiths and beliefs in adopting the scientific temper as the sheet-anchor of man's physical existence even as it refused to stay earth-bound. Myth and superstition were forever banished from the Sikh thought and theology. The frequent use of the idiom pertaining to configuration of planets and heavenly bodies in Guru Granth Sahib denotes and decries the depth of ignorance among the illiterate masses then – as now.

One is struck by the reference to sciences other than physical. Take, for instance, the following utterance of Guru Arjun, the Fifth Guru, on rampant economic disparity being the root cause of social unrest:

ਕਿਸ ਹੀ ਵਾਧਿ ਘਾਟਿ ਕਿਸ ਹੀ ਪਹਿ ਸਗਲੇ ਲਰਿ ਲਰਿ ਮੂਆ ॥੩॥

[SGGS: 673]

Enter the rationalist, who decries religion as the villain generating internecine hatred. This reaction arises from ignorance of science of the mind. Religious perversity, no religion or Theology, is responsible for hate and violence. There is no conflict between religion and science, but between religion and blind faith. The blind faith- in whatever denomination – breeds hatred and violence. The entire Guru Granth Sahib is a repudiation of this false religion.

Fanaticism is merely another face of this falsity. It is contagious. It tends to evoke similar response from the adversary. Pascal said it more than three centuries ago: "Men never do evil so completely and cheerfully as when they do it from religious conviction." This is true of any religion gone berserk - including Sikhism. It is also true of the narrow nationalism of the kind that induces wars, such as between Iran and Iraq, or hatred, such as between India and Pakistan. Narrow nationalism, often masquerading as patriotism, is as dangerous as blind faith *bereft* of the true scientific spirit of enquiry – which Guru Granth Sahib sanctifies in numerous allusions. Cynics never fail to argue: How can one speak of a benevolent God in a world of war and misery, little realising that the very question opens the door to theological enlightenment, the truth about pain and pleasure, life and death on the physical plane, the suffering of the righteous, the crucifixion of a Christ or the agonising martyrdom of Guru Arjun Devji. □

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Guru Nanak's Views about War and Violence

*PRIN. SAWAN SINGH GOGIA**

Many historians have written that the later Gurus who adopted the method of armed confrontation and encouraged militarization of the Sikhs deviated from the lofty mission of Guru Nanak who was peace-loving and who believed in the ideal of well-fare, equality and brotherhood of all. No doubt, Guru Nanak preached love, compassion, peace and harmony with all, but these scholars have overlooked Guru Nanak's opposition to evil and protest against social, religious and political order of his time. He unequivocally and fearlessly criticized the existing system and struggled in the name of God to remove it and replace it with a just world order. His protest and struggle have not been properly judged.

Protest and criticism of the political system:

There are many verses composed by Guru Nanak which show his protest against the corrupt political set-up. He not only raised his voice against the unjust and biased Lodhi and Mughal rulers whose spoken word was a law against which there could not be any appeal , but also recorded it in black and white. Only a spiritual person and reformer of revolutionary bent of mind like Guru Nanak could call a spade a spade and openly call the autocrat kings as butchers and their ministers dogs. He strongly condemned the lawlessness prevailing in those days:

ਸਰਮ ਧਰਮ ਕਾ ਡੇਰਾ ਦੂਰਿ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਕੂੜੁ ਰਹਿਆ ਭਰਪੂਰਿ ॥
[SGGS:471]

'Modesty and faith are far from them. O Nanak, they are totally permeated with falsehood.'

ਕਲਿ ਕਾਤੀ ਰਾਜੇ ਕਾਸਾਈ ਧਰਮੁ ਪੰਖ ਕਰਿ ਉਡਰਿਆ ॥
ਕੂੜ ਅਮਾਵਸ ਦੀਸੈ ਨਾਹੀ ਕਹ ਚੜਿਆ ॥[SGGS: 145]

The Dark Age of Kali Yuga is the knife, and the kings are butchers; righteousness has sprouted wings and flown away. In this dark night of falsehood, the moon of Truth is not visible anywhere.'

ਰਾਜੇ ਸੀਹ ਮੁਕਦਮ ਕੁਤੇ ॥ ਜਾਇ ਜਗਾਇਨਿ੍ ਬੈਠੇ ਸੁਤੇ ॥
[SGGS:1288]

"The king are like tigers and their underlings like dogs; they go out and awaken the sleeping people to harass them". In Guru Nank's opinion, a powerful country has no right to usurp the territory of a weaker country and should desist from waging war against it:

ਪਾਪ ਕੀ ਜੰਵ ਲੈ ਕਾਬਲਹੁ ਧਾਇਆ ਜੋਰੀ ਮੰਗੈ ਦਾਨੁ ਵੇ ਲਾਲੋ ॥
[SGGS:722]

Bringing the marriage party of sin (cruel army), Babar, the Mughal king,

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invaded from Kabul demanding land as his wedding gift". After expressing his anguish against barbarism of the invading forces, Guru Nanak does not hesitate to record that if a mighty person attacks his mighty foe. one should not complain, but when a mighty ruler falls upon a defenseless one, the Master is answerable for his safety:

ਜੇ ਸਕਤਾ ਸਕਤੇ ਕਉ ਮਾਰੇ ਤਾ ਮਨਿ ਰੋਸੁ ਨ ਹੋਈ ॥
ਸਕਤਾ ਸੀਹੁ ਮਾਰੇ ਪੈ ਵਗੈ ਖਸਮੈਸਾ ਪੁਰਸਾਈ ॥
[SGGS:360]

"When the strong strike the strong, the mind does not grieve, but If a powerful tiger falls on a herd of cattle, the herdsman must be held responsible".

Guru Nanak remarked that the merit and competence should determine the right to the throne:

ਤਖਤਿ ਬਹੈ ਤਖਤੈ ਕੀ ਲਾਇਕ ॥ [SGGS: 1039]

'He alone sits on the throne, who is worthy of the throne.'

He condemned corruption and ruled that a king should dispense justice :

ਰਾਜਾ ਨਿਆਉ ਕਰੇ ਹਥਿ ਹੋਇ ॥ ਕਹੈ ਖੁਦਾਇ ਨ ਮਾਨੈ ਕੋਇ ॥
[SGGS:350]

"The ruler administers justice only if his palm is greased. Nobody is moved by the name of God".He was of the view that Almighty Lord is the final authority:

ਕੀੜਾ ਥਾਪਿ ਦੇਇ ਪਾਤਿਸਾਹੀ ਲਸਕਰ ਕਰੇ ਸੁਆਹ ॥
[SGGS:144]

He (God) could appoint a worm as king, and reduce an army to ashes.' He believed that one should owe allegiance to God and not to the throne or any authority:

ਦਰੁ ਬੀਭਾ ਮੈ ਨੀਮ੍ਹਿ ਕੋ ਕੈ ਕਰੀ ਸਲਾਮੁ ॥ [SGGS: 418]

'I have no other door than Thine, O Lord. Where shall I go to salute? Guru Nanak advises us to control vices and strife which vitiate human relationship

ਕਲਹਿ ਬੁਰੀ ਸੰਸਾਰਿ ਵਾਦੇ ਖਪੀਐ ॥ [SGGS: 142]

'The strife of this world is evil; these struggles are consuming it.'

Protestand criticism of the Social Order

To bring about radical changes in the existing social order, Guru Nanak suggested new ideas and to realize them he started the new institutions of Guruship, Langar (free common kitchen), Sangat (congregation) and Dharamsals. He not only challenged the existing social order, but also started a relentless struggle against it leading to a fresh new order which was established by the later Gurus. He condemned the caste system which divided the society:

ਸਭ ਮਹਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਹੈ ਸੋਇ ॥ ਤਿਸ ਦੈ ਚਾਨਣਿ ਸਭ ਮਹਿ ਚਾਨਣੁ ਹੋਇ ॥ [SGGS:13]

"Amongst all is the Light-You are that Light. By this Illumination, that Light is radiant within all."

ਜਾਤੀ ਦੈ ਕਿਆ ਹਥਿ ਸਚੁ ਪਰਖੀਐ ॥ ਮਹੁਰਾ ਹੋਵੈ ਹਥਿ ਮਰੀਐ ਚਖੀਐ ॥ [SGGS:142]

"What good is social class and status? Truthfulness is measured (in the Lord's

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court). Pride in one's status is like poison-holding it in your hand and eating it, you shall die."

He was the first religious leader who raised his voiceagainst the exploitation of women in the societyand persuaded people to change their thinking:

ਭੰਡਹੁ ਹੀ ਭੰਡੁ ਊਪਜੈ ਭੰਡੈ ਬਾਝੁ ਨ ਕੋਇ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਭੰਡੈ ਬਾਹਰਾ ਏਕੋ ਸਚਾ ਸੋਇ ॥ [SGGS:473]

'From woman, woman is born; without woman, there would be no one at all O Nanak, only the True Lord is without a woman.'

Criticism and Protest against the Religious Order:

Like a true and genuine prophet, Guru Nanak did not manifest himself as God nor did he accept the world as it was. He strongly opposed and preached against the bad customs and traditions encouraged by greedy religious leaders. He declined to wear the formal thread round his neck and instead of it wanted to embrace the virtues ofmodesty, contentment and truth:

ਦਇਆ ਕਪਾਹ ਸੰਤੋਖੁ ਸੂਤੁ ਜਤੁ ਗੰਢੀ ਸਤੁ ਵਟੁ॥ ਏਹੁ ਜਨੇਊ ਜੀਅ ਕਾ ਹਈ ਤ ਪਾਡੇ ਘਤੁ ॥ [SGGS: 471]

'Make compassion the cotton, contentment the thread, modesty the knot and truth the twist. This is the sacred thread of the soul; if you have it, then go ahead and put it on me.'

He admonished people to give up idol worship and follow virtues and commands of theLord:

ਪਾਥਰੁ ਲੇ ਪੂਜਹਿ ਮੁਗਧ ਗਵਾਰ॥ ਓਹਿ ਜਾ ਆਪਿ ਡੁਬੇ ਤੁਮ ਕਹਾ ਤਰਣਹਾਰੁ ॥ [SGGS: 556]

"The ignorant fools pick up stones and worship them. These stones, themselves, sink low. How can they ferry others across (the world ocean)?"He advised people not to follow rituals like keeping fast on certain days, believe in God and not to wander in search of Him:

ਅੰਨੁ ਨ ਖਾਇਆ ਸਾਦੁ ਗਵਾਇਆ ॥ਬਹੁ ਦੁਖੁ ਪਾਇਆ ਦੂਜਾ ਭਾਇਆ ॥ [SGGS: 467]

'One who does not eat the corn, misses out on the taste. One obtains great pain, in the love of duality.'

ਰਹੈ ਬੇਬਾਣੀ ਮੜੀ ਮਸਾਣੀ ॥ਅੰਧੁ ਨ ਜਾਣੈ ਫਿਰਿ ਪਛੁਤਾਣੀ ॥ [SGGS: 467]

'One who lives in the wilderness, in cemeteries and cremation grounds is blind (ignorant) who does not know the Lord; he regrets and repents in the end.'

He severelycriticized the so-called religious leaders and awakened the people:

ਕਾਦੀ ਕੂੜੁ ਬੋਲਿ ਮਲੁ ਖਾਇ ॥ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣੁ ਨਾਵੈ ਜੀਆ ਘਾਇ ॥ ਜੋਗੀ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਨ ਜਾਣੈ ਅੰਧੁ ॥ ਤੀਨੇ ਓਜਾੜੇ ਕਾ ਬੰਧੁ ॥ [SGGS: 662]

"The Qazi utters falsehood and eats filth. The Brahman slays life and then bathes at the pilgrim stations .The Yogi is blind, and does not know the Way to meet God. The three of them devise their own destruction." ConclusionAny religion/ faith preaching resistance to evil social order as a divine obligation in its endeavor for justice is likely to come in conflict or clash with the state that wants to perpetuate its order for its own benefit. The ensuing conflict is bound to lead

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to war and violence. Guru Nanak strongly abhorred war and violence, but also asked us not to hesitate from sacrificing ourselves for truth:

ਜਉ ਤਉ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਖੇਲਣ ਕਾ ਚਾਉ ॥ ਸਿਰੁ ਧਰਿ ਤਲੀ ਗਲੀ ਮੇਰੀ ਆਉ ॥ ਇਤੁ ਮਾਰਗਿ ਪੈਰੁ ਧਰੀਜੈ ॥ ਸਿਰੁ ਦੀਜੈ ਕਾਣਿ ਨ ਕੀਜੈ ॥ [SGGS:1412]

" If you desire to play the game of love, then step onto my Path with your head in hand .When You place your feet on this path, give me your head, and do not care for the public opinion".

He even declared death for a just cause is the right of brave persons:

ਮਰਣੁ ਮੁਣਸਾਂ ਸੂਚਿਆ ਹਕੁ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਹੋਇ ਮਰਹਿ ਪਰਵਾਣੇ ॥ [SGGS: 579]

'The death of brave heroes is blessed, if it is approved by God.'

We can safely conclude that there was no difference between the Guru Nanak's response towar and violence and that of Guru Gobind Singh . There was a huge change in the political situation and restoring to arms in self defence was the need of the time. Guru Gobind Singh has rightly remarked in the **'Zafarnama'**:

ਚੁਕਾਰ ਅਜ਼ ਹਮਹ ਹੀਲਤੇ ਦਰ ਗੁਜ਼ਸ਼ਤ ॥ ਹਲਾਲ ਅਸਤ ਬੁਰਦਨ ਬ ਸ਼ਮਸ਼ੀਰ ਦਸਤ ॥ 22

" When all other means have failed, it is but righteous to take the sword in hand".

The Seeker's Path: An Interpretation of Guru Nanak's Japji, by Sohan Singh

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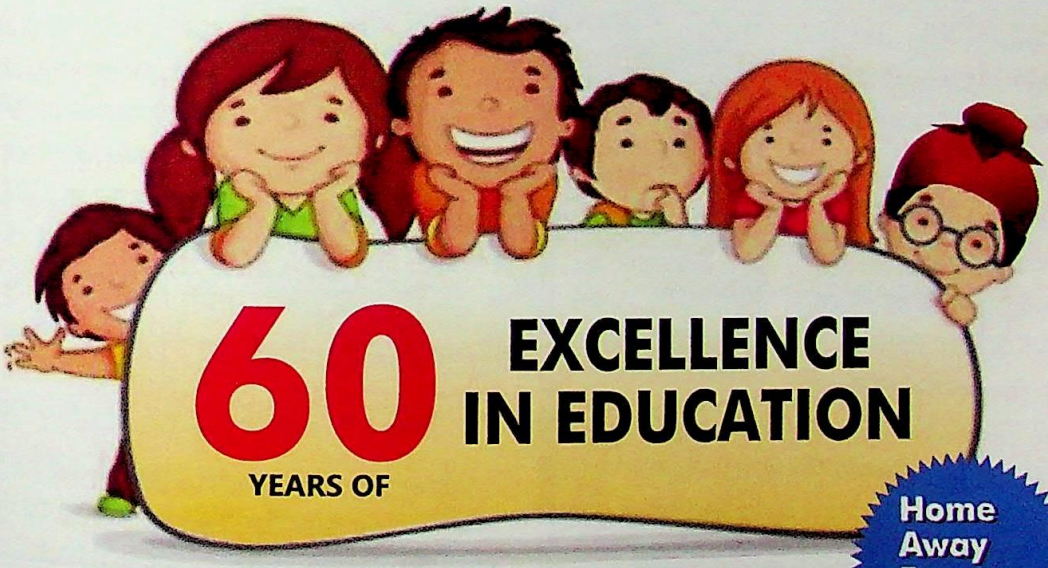
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Baba Banda Singh Bahadur- The Warrior & Naming Of Baba Banda Bahadur Barapulla Flyover

*PARTAP SINGH**

The year 2016 marks the 300th anniversary of Baba Banda Singh Bahadur's martyrdom. In fact, 20th & 21st century shall be remembered by the coming generation as the period of renaissance for Sikh community, who are celebrating a series of major events starting with 300 years of Khalsa Sirjna Day bestowed by 10th Master Guru Gobind Singh at Anandpur Sahib on the eve of Baisakhi in 1699.



05284-1_The Shik Cultural

Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee decided to dedicate year 2016 in memory of the First Sikh Warrior Baba Banda Singh Bahadur, who played a significant role in the history of India and Punjab. From being an ascetic Madho Das, he became one of the most trusted disciples of Guru Gobind Singh. After initiation through a baptism ceremony by the Guru, he was given a new name as SardarGurbax Singh and finally he came to known as Banda Singh Bahadur. It was Banda Singh Bahadur, who was responsible for establishing the first sovereign Khalsa Raj in North Western State of Punjab for a relatively short period between 1710-1716.

Banda's vision, pragmatic and systematic approach, and selfless service makes him one of the most impressive and fascinating characters in Sikh history. A true leader who led from the front, not only in the battle field but also in civil administration, he established a secular government. Banda Singh Bahadur dismantled nearly 700 years of slavery and the myth of domination by foreign powers. He proclaimed freedom of worship, allowed people to follow a profession of their choice and brought about major land reforms. His land revolution abolished zamindari in parts

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of North India, thereby re-distributing land equally amongst landless tillers.

At the place where Baba Banda Singh Bahadur fought his heroic battle of ChapperChirri in 1710, and defeated the Nawab Of Sirhind, now stands a magnificent memorial in memory of Baba Banda Singh Bahadur. It is a landmark historic site for any visitor to feel the glory of time over 300 years ago of an era that saw the First Sikh Raj in part of Northern India, Punjab.

Banda Singh Bahadur became the first of many legendary Sikh Generals famous both for skill in warfare and personal heroic courage. His many encounters with Mughal rulers eroded the might and very foundation of the Mughal empire subsequently paving the ground for coming together of Sikh Misals (Chiefs). Later, it was this coming together of several Sikh Misals that helped Maharaja Ranjit Singh in creating a Sikh Raj in 1799.

A series of seminars were organised through the year by the International Centre For Sikh Studies, New Delhi to celebrate the life and achievements of Banda Bahadur. Different aspects of work undertaken by him after leaving Nanded, Mahatastra were deliberated and new findings were brought out by eminent scholars mostly from Punjabi University & other Centres of higher studies.

Most of the scholars, however, were of the opinion that history has not done full justice to the contribution made by Baba Banda Singh Bahadur. The scholars cited that this is especially true during the period of eminent Sikh Historians such as S. Rattan Singh Bhangoo and Dr.Ganda Singh. No written evidence can be gathered on the life and accomplishments of Banda Bahadur during this period even though the records were available from Persian sources at that tme. This has led to some distortion while projecting the historic and inspiring works and achievements of Banda Bahadur.

It is equally surprising that no National Historian ever thought of undertaking any research work while writing history of India Punjab on the very significant role played by Banda Singh Bahadur. Banda Singh Bahadur, however, received a befitting tribute by Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore who wrote a Bengali poem namely **BANDI BIR** (The Valiant Prisoner). In fact, Banda Singh Bahadur and several other Sikh warriors even today are highly appreciated and written about in text books in Bengal. Hari Ram Gupta, a historian (1902-1992), did some more research work on Banda Singh Bahadur, which is also mentioned in his book titled 'History Of Sikhs'(5 Volumes). Present day historians like Dr.Sukhdial Singh (2000) and others who were able to assess Persian sources from Aligarh Muslim University and the archives have come out with clear and

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authentic details about Banda Bahadur that almost overrules much of the distortion that has appeared earlier.

I had the opportunity of visiting Baba Banda Singh Bahadur's birth place village in Rajouri – Poonch area while posted in that region from 1976 to 1980. During my tenure in the region, I had tried to get some information from the locals about this great warrior but it was very sketchy. In fact, the old Silk Route used extensively by the Mughal rulers for going to Srinagar & beyond passes through Rajouri and also has other places of historical importance like Nowsehra, Surankot and NooraiChamb (a waterfall studded with mirrors known for resting and bathing place whenever Noor Jahan used to pass that area). This is the route I would take to visit the BOPs (border out posts) along the Line of Control, which divides Pak occupied Kashmir.

As per the new research done by historians from Punjabi University as well as general logic and mentioned by Dr.Jaspal Singh V C, the first war of independence in its true essence, happened in 1710 when Banda Bahadur defeated Nawab of Sirhind at ChapparChirri. This brought an end to the 700 years of Mughal rule and established the first ever secular government in Northern part of India, Punjab. Banda Bahadur had also brought out currency coins in the name of both Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh. Historians, however, have recorded the year 1857 initially as the Gadar-mutiny movement, which subsequently came to be known as first war of independence due to reasons best known to them, thereby covering only the period of BritishRaj's rule over India.

A scholar and writer Dr.Harbans Kaur Sagoo, Director International Centre For Sikh Studies, who has been working on life and achievements of Baba Banda Singh Bahadurfrom 1998 onwards and wrote a well research book namelyBaba Banda Singh Bahadur First Soverign Ruler in 2002. Subsequently, she has mapped out in detail the route taken by Mughal Rulers while bringing the captive Baba Banda Singh Bahadur and his 780 companions in a cage to Delhi from his capital Lohgarh Fort, Haryana. On reaching Delhi, they were mercilessly tortured. This was followed by mass killing of Banda's followers in batches of 100 for days as non of them accepted conversion to Islam. This has also been recorded in a travelogue in Persian written by Mughal rulers. Banda Bahadur was finally killed near QutubMinar and this fact got well established in early 80s. Thereafter, Dr.Sagoo filled up the missing link and located the village where remains of Banda Singh Bahadur, who was cut into pieces were finally cremated. This was Village of Barapulla, where now stands the Barapulla flyover, which links South Delhi to Noida.

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Sr. Tarlochan Singh, former Member of Parliament of the RajyaSabha, met Sri ArvindKejriwal, the Chief Minister of Delhi, with all credible documents and advocated renaming of this flyover to honour the Sikh Warrior. The Barapulla Flyover was renamed Baba Banda Singh Bahadur +Setu, a befitting tribute to the heroic role played by Banda Bahadur in the history of undivided India.

The Sikh Forum, a New Delhi based apolitical registered body wrote a letter of appreciation on 9 June 2016 to Sri Arvind Kejriwal for this welcome and patriotic gesture of great historical importance. This is also a great achievement for the Sikhs that Government Of Delhi has named the most popular flyover in South Delhi as Banda Singh BahadurSetu. Lakhs of people travelling daily on this flyover will remember the contribution made by Banda Singh Bahadur for centuries. In fact, this is for the first time in free India that the role of a Sikh Hero has been recognised.

To participate in the 300th year celebrations in memory of Banda Bahadur a large group of Sikh jathas, and followers of Banda Bahadur from Rajouri/Jammu, Nanded Sahib and other parts of India come together in procession/s, and holding of Kirtan Darbars in different parts of Delhi.

The celebrations culminated at Qutab Minar on 24 June 2016 and was attended by over 20,000 people to pay homage to the life and achievements of a great hero Baba Banda Singh Bahadur!

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The Prelude to The Partition: 1947
An Untold Story of Bravery, Honour and Tragedy!

*Bhupinder Singh Fidoic (Kashmir)**

Mob of Religious Fanatics Attacks the Sikh Village

They descended on our village in hundreds of thousands, equipped, with ferocious weapons. It was a harsh night of March 6th, 1947. Ours was a little village of a few hundred families, mostly Zamindars, both Hindus and Sikhs. The attackers were mostly the laborers in our own farms. I cannot recall the cause of the attack, because 66 years is too long a period to recount.

Entrapped in Haveli

We fought for three days, no not me, I was just 16. I was locked-upstairs in my Haveli, with my sister Mann Kaur and my mom and several other women of our house. Several children were also with me. A small window of the left wall was my only way to look what was happening outside. The clashes were turning bloody. A few hundred people against an uncountable armed mob portrayed absolute death. There was a remote possibility of surviving. My father was fighting, blazing red in anger, bloodstains on his dress made him look more furious. His double edged Khanda was piercing the bodies of Muslims. Blood was pouring out in all directions. There were several other leaders fighting shoulder to shoulder along with his side,

Negotiating Honor of Hindu Girl

The attackers were larger in number. One fell, and other replaced the fallen. The number of villagers fighting for the honor was dwindling gradually. After 3 days of furious battle, the leader of the village decided to negotiate a truce with the attackers. They were very concerned about the death of the villagers. Instead of sparing the village, the attackers wanted custody of one of its girls.

Mansi was a lovely Hindu girl with a good figure and long black hair flowing to her back. She had a sort of relationship with one of the Muslim boys. The village was well aware of it. Her parents too were aware of the relationship. The community leaders keeping everything in mind, at first, contemplated agreeing to this demand of the Muslim mob. agreeing to this demand of the Muslim mob.

Later the thought was dismissed. My father refused the bargain. We were Sikhs and couldn't have let that happen. Trading a girl with Muslims to save our life was worse

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than death for a Sardar. Sardar belongs to the lineage very generous and brave, which was always at the forefront in protecting the women. We were created by our Gurus, and we sacrificed a lot of blood while fighting atrocities of rulers of the like of Aurangzeb.

My father devised a way to put the voice of dissent to rest and set a precedent.

I was hungry from past three days. Not only me, but all others locked up with me in that little room were hungry and frustrated. Every face had a weird expression, witnessing the bloodshed from the only window and thinking all sort of stuff. Many questions flashed in our minds. Will we live? How many are dead? When will we get out of this room?

Exemplary Courage and Martyrdom

On 9th March, we were finally allowed to walk down the stairs and get into the common hall. There were several other women. My father and his brother along with several other villagers were also present. His cloak was all red with blood. He was also bleeding, not profusely, but if allowed further to bleed he would die of blood loss.

What my father did was most unexpected. He and his brother rounded up 26 women of the house in the common hall of the Haveli in which we were locked from the last three days. I was again asked to go upstairs along with my mom and all the little children. Only the young women aged 15-45 were kept in the hall. My curiosity to go downstairs got the better of me. I hid behind the staircase. All the women were now sitting in the middle of the room. My father looked at me. He told me to come and sit along with the other people. Avtar uncle said, "he is too tender for this." "He is a Sikh" my father replied. I did as my father said. I was not clear about what was going on. Some of the women were looking horrified, some were feeling proud. I didn't know what was going on in their mind.

My father walked up to the middle of the room. His khanda was all stained with blood. He called out in al loud voice, "Mann Kaur, itheraa (come here)." My sister stood up from his place, she walked down to him and bowed her head. Her dupatta was on her neck. Her long hairs was plaited. They separated her dupatta from her bare neck skin. It was coming in his way. He put his hand on her head. She stood up. He placed her dupatta aside and then shifted her hair in front. I was still confused why she bared her head in front of all the people. Among the Sikhs keeping head uncovered is considered disrespectful. She again bowed. My father lifted his khanda and shouted 'Waheguru'. The next moment what I saw was most disturbing and horrifying. My sister's head fell apart. Her body fell on one side and head on other. Fountains of blood colored the floor. My father's face was all blood, so were his clothes.

I fainted. I was in trauma. How can a father behead his daughter? How can all those people be spectators? How can a girl come in front to get slaughtered? How can

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her face portray pride in death? How? Tears were rolling down my eyes. All these questions flashed through my mind. I was lying unconscious. The moment I woke up, I was soaked in blood. My sister's blood had reached me. Avtar uncle came to my side and said, 'you are a Sikh, look there.' I was still dizzy. I managed to look at that side again. What I saw was still more spellbound. Turn by turn, one by one, all the women were lining up to get beheaded. They wanted to die! The blood which reached my feet was not only of my sister but three more bodies were now lying on the floor. All beheaded! There were 26 women in total. This continued till the last body fell apart. Now the room was flooded with blood. At last, he again cried 'Waheguru' and then shouted the victory cry 'Bole So Nihal, Sat Sri Akal.' The room echoed. Every single person in the room responded to it.

Only now do I fully take in the surrounding. A trance mob, brown and scratchy staircase, bodies piling on each other, heads oozing blood, the red floor with ankle dripping blood, a man in the middle with a khanda in his hand and satisfaction on his face. Everything was in a single frame. I could see it all, still, majestic, spell-bound, gaiety and brave. I adjusted my head to take in more of the scene.

There was an unknown silence in the hall. Everyone was looking at my father including me. I was unable to understand why he went on this rampage killing of all the women in the corridor? Was it a rampage? He looked calm and proud. Was he a normal person? Why did he kill them all? Why didn't anyone object? Why was none crying? Why was this rare satisfaction on everyone's face? What wrong had the women done? Why they all smilingly went forward to get beheaded? Why? I had a lot of why's in my mind? I didn't know the answers of nor could I go and ask my dad.

The older women and the children were locked upstairs. Were they unaware of what happened down here? Their aunts, moms, sisters were killed. I was again feeling traumatic. Disgust was engulfing me again.

The noise of blades clashing against each other again came from outside hall. A few villagers rushed to my father and said something to him. I was not in any state to hear that. I was a silent spectator to this gruesome event. It comes back to me every night. It makes me feel proud, brave and courageous. But it is now. And that was then. I was suffocated of all the bloody smell. The gory event made me run upstairs. My father and other people went outside to battle again.

I opened the room and embraced my mother. I was crying. Tears were coming out like nothing. I told her the whole story, still crying and hugging her. It gave me solace to narrate everything to her. She closed her eyes. A tear rolled down her cheek and assembled at her chin. She sighed out 'Waheguru.'

I remember it was 3:30, the sun was in his abundant grace. The blue sky and the red ground gave a vivid contrast. The sky was kissing the earth. We again went to the window to be witness to the battle of life,

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honor, and pride and also of stupidity and numbers. The attackers were getting the upper hand. The Sikh villagers were already reduced to 1/5th. A few handful brave people were fighting. Lightning sparks came out when the blades clashed. Several were bleeding, several were fallen, and several were to fall.

My father was fighting at one corner. He was being attacked by three people. He was dogging and then attacking back. One of them got his back and swiftly cut through his right leg. He was now in pain. I could see from here. But he still was trying to fight. He jumped back to him and turned to his side. One of the other two now passed his blade through his back. It entered him from the back, pierced and then came out from his belly. It was a killing stroke. The attacker did not draw his sword out. He left it there. My father fell to his knees and then collapsed. I was still a silent spectator. He was killed. My mom again said 'Waheguru'. And I still unaware of the cause of all that was happening from last three days.

The Last Escape

My mom assembled everyone at the center of the room. They all decided to run out of the haveli and escape from the hands of these Muslims. There were just old women and small children. Every young woman was already killed. Every young man was out there fighting the attackers.

We all hurried down the stairs, opened the back door and fled. The attackers were finished with the villagers fighting. Most of our men were dead. Some were amputated. Some were breathing their last breaths. Some were still trying to fight. The attacker now ran after us. Women and children from the other houses also joined us in this run. I was now running for my life. Most of the children were. But the women were not running for their life. They were running for something else, something larger than life and something more important than any other thing. Honour. They were running for their pride. They were running for their respect. The attackers were behind us. Taking hostage every woman they found in their way, killing every male, whether young and old.

Sikh Women Jumping in the Well

Several women escaped the butchers and jumped into the village well. Some were still hostages. I was still running for my life. My mom was running for her pride. Most of the women now took into the direction of the village well. They were jumping in it along with their children. I was running, running for my life, running to drown in a well. I will get killed either way.

I was along with my mom. I asked her 'why are we doing this, let them take us, at least we will live.' Her reply made my heart pump blood double the speed. My adrenaline was on all-time high. My eyes began to roll down tears again, I was dumbfounded. But my brain did all the thinking.

She said 'it's better to die with honor than to live with disgrace. She continued,

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'Son we are Sikhs. Self-respect, honor and prestige are more important than life for us.' She said, 'son all those women preferred to lay down their lives in the hall over getting away alive with the attacker and then raped and live to be sex machines.' She said, 'live with honour or come die with honour'.

She jumped into well. I jumped into the well with her.

I was unconscious. I was dead. I was dead inside. Everything flashed before my eyes. Pictures of the hall and the ground were coming in front of my eyes. All my questions were now being answered. Now I knew how a father can behead his daughter. Now I knew how all those people be spectators and not object. Now I knew how a girl can come in front to get slaughtered. Now I knew how her face can portray pride in death. Now I knew it was not a rampage. Now I knew why everybody was satisfied. Now I knew why everyone of those girls came forward to get beheaded. Now I realize why my sister put her dupatta and guth away, so my father's sword finds it easy to cut through. Now I was feeling proud. I was feeling satisfied. They all died in honor. They all sacrificed their lives for the sake of honor, for the benefit of a rich heritage which made them Sikhs. They all were martyrs. Sacred martyrs!

Death Escaped Some

But I was not dead. I was not drowned. My mother was not dead. She was not drowned. We jumped into well. But we were alive. The well was already full of women and children. Hundreds of them have jumped into it before us. They filled it up. We were now lying on their bodies.

A day later people from other villagers came and rescued us. I was alive, so were a lot of our villagers. 26 women of our family were beheaded by my dad, some jumped into the well. Some were killed by the attackers. Some were taken hostages. The few of us who survived crossed over the borders to India. We lived in a camp for several months. My mother died after a few months of some undiagnosed disease. The rest of my relatives were with me.

A month later the girl who was to be traded with the Muslim attackers, eloped with his lover, one of the attacker.

Decades Later

It's been 66 years now. I still remember the episode. I still feel proud and satisfied. I still feel I am living with honor. I know those who were martyred lived with honor and died with honor. When I tell this to my new generation, they ask me, 'does it not seem like a tragic error of judgment, when the girl for whose honor a full village got extinct fled away with her lover, to live in disgrace again?'

I didn't reply to them but had my father agreed to the arrangement, I wouldn't have been able to face them and tell them this tale of pride, honor, and respect. Those girls could have fallen prey to the attackers later, several did in fact. It was the best they could do to protect their honor.

'I live in honor, and I will die in honor' I promised my mother. ❑

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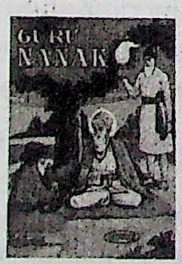


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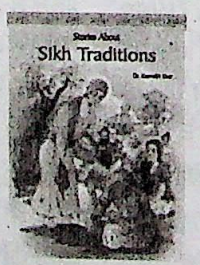


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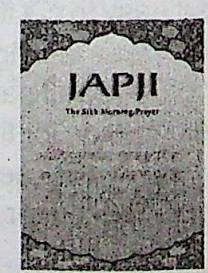
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SIKHI: Creationism, Evolution & Related Matters

*I.J. SINGH (USA)**

[*PART-I*]

Abstract

The contentious debate between the many faith traditions of mankind and doctrine of Darwinian evolution of species is neither new nor unexpected. How plausible is the theoretical basis of evolutionary hypothesis and how can it be comfortably woven into the fabric of a faith society that is governed a priori not by experimental evidence but by faith that demands the presence of a first cause (Creator) for the richness of the creation of which we are a vital part.

Further complicating the design and structure of this creation is the obvious fact that scientific theories, hypotheses and mechanisms are, by definition, tentatively held – to be further explored and modified, replaced or denied in part or in toto. Religious doctrines, however, come with certainty of doctrinal truth not to be easily modified or reinterpreted without the danger of rending societal structure and stability.

Sikhism (Sikhi) is a young, relatively small religion of nearly 25 million believers worldwide that arose over just 500 years ago in Punjab in the northwest corner of the Indian subcontinent. It presents a worldview that is impacted by both Vedic traditions of Hinduism and the Semitic outlook that came via Islam. Sikhism is a monotheistic faith that views a common Creator that is infinite, has no shape or form, nor a fixed location, caste, creed, color, gender or national origin.

This paper briefly touches on the presumed conflict between science and religion and finds no legs for such an assumption in Sikhi. It then goes on to explore the Sikh viewpoint on Darwinian Evolution, Creationism, Intelligent Design and related matters. Sikh traditions coupled with an exploration of Sikh spiritual writings are examined.

In my view, the Sikh position is consistent with Intelligent Design working in tandem with Darwinian Evolution.

Introduction

I step into this territory – historically and veritably a minefield – gingerly and with a great deal of trepidation, though I confess to some earlier, hesitant forays1. My purpose here is to delve into the inter-connections between the Sikh religion and

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the overarching Darwinian scheme that evolutionary biologists (before and after Darwin) have explored and mined at length, in order to parse the complexity and variety of life of which we humans are a small, but vital and dominant part.

The irony of my entering the ring today on the matter of evolution and related issues is heightened by the fact that I am academically or formally trained neither in evolutionary theory nor in the religious discipline and philosophical underpinnings of Sikhism. Surely, glaring gaps in my information base, if not in my convictions, remain.

Where am I coming from, as I head into this quagmire?

I am a Sikh with a fair degree of demonstrable curiosity about my faith. I am also a trained experimental biologist with a serviceable understanding of evolutionary biology. I see that the two – faith and science – coexist comfortably within me. This is my starting point for what I hope to explore today.

Most of the major world religions, but particularly the Abrahamic traditions – Judaism, Christianity and Islam – have a complex and often contentious relationship with Darwinian hypotheses as commonly interpreted. However, over time they have developed and evolved models of somewhat manageable coexistence with Darwin's work. Although evolution and its theoretical underpinnings now transcend Darwin's time and vision, his work still continues to rile and haunt many, while just as many see Darwinian evolution as gospel etched in stone.

For many readers here, Sikhism (or Sikhi, as many Sikhs refer to their faith) constitutes the new kids on the block. Ergo, Sikhi needs a brief and cogent introduction before we parse its perspectives on creation, evolution and related matters.

Overview of Sikhi

Religions do not take birth de novo in a vacuum. The origin of Sikhi is traced to Punjab, a volatile area in the northwestern portion of the Indian subcontinent. Since 1947, this culturally diverse, rich and historically turbulent land stands divided – the western half of Punjab constitutes the larger part of Pakistan; the eastern half lies in India.

Throughout the centuries, Himalayan Mountains provided a rugged barrier to most invaders into the subcontinent; the sea was a natural defense against the remaining avenues. Traditionally, the only passable inlet for large migrations of people into the land has been the Khyber Pass in the mountain ranges that connect present day Pakistan to Afghanistan. History speaks of a host of traders and merchants, as well as invaders – from Alexander the Great and his Greek hordes to Arabs, Pashtuns, Mongols, Mughals, Persians, and varied tribal people

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– as being among the many that hurtled into India through the Khyber Pass to plunder and return, perish or stay. History also suggests that the very large migration several thousand years ago from the Caucasus may have progressed in two directions – towards Europe and towards Northwest India into Punjab. (Some anthropologists consider this little historical nugget controversial and somewhat doubtful.) The large-scale arrival of Europeans by sea to India did not occur until the British, French and Dutch sailed forth in the 15th to 17th centuries.

This means that in world history, Punjab, along with the Balkans, has constituted the busiest laboratory of human migrations and genetic hybridization, whether in culture, trade, music, languages and cuisine, or in adding to the complexity of the human gene pool.

Indeed, the Semitic religions represented by Islam and Vedic faiths derived from Hinduism met and interacted intimately, often violently, in Punjab2. One addendum: I would characterize this engagement of the great religious systems less of a meeting and more of a collision.

Guru Nanak, the first Sikh Guru, founded Sikhism in Punjab and its neighboring territories about 550 years ago. This makes Sikhi one of the youngest of the major religions of mankind. It is a small faith tradition, with only about 25 million adherents worldwide. While 22-23 million Sikhs still live in Punjab, today there is no continent or country in the world where Sikhs are not found.

At Sikhi's inception, Indian culture was predominately Hindu. This remains true today. However, Islam, although a small minority, was the politically dominant presence at the time of Sikhi's birth. Many scholars look at Sikhi as a synthesis of the best that Hinduism and Islam had to offer, but most Sikh scholars posit that it is a unique and original faith discipline, though a small drop in the large sea of Hinduism and Islam, and not a syncretistic blend of other faith disciplines.

Be that as it may, the practices and ideas of both Hindu Vedic and Islamic realities impacted Sikhi and are widely referenced in Sikh teaching. For example, both Hindu and Muslim names for the Creator repeatedly appear in Sikh scripture and practices. Critical commentaries on practices of both Hinduism and Islam are abundantly found in the Sikh scripture, the Sri Guru Granth Sahib. The contributors to the Guru Granth were not only six of the ten Founder-Gurus of Sikhism, but also many of the Hindu and Muslim holy men and most eminent scholars of that time. Some were low caste Hindus. Most of them were people who would never ever sit together or break bread together, much less be caught on the adjoining pages of the same holy book. Yet that is exactly where they have found a place in the Guru Granth.

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It is important to note that, for Sikhs, the Guru Granth is not only their scripture. It is also the eternal, living Guru of the Sikhs, a veritable "11th Guru."

Most early converts to Sikhi came from Hindu roots and many of them carried their previous worldview into the new faith. Yet, the teachings of Guru Nanak – and the nine Sikh Gurus who succeeded him – rejected many Hindu practices of the day, such as the rigidly structured caste system with no vertical mobility, the lowly place of women in society and the idol worship of the many gods and goddesses that constitute the Hindu pantheon. Sikhi also rejected many Islamic beliefs, most importantly the aggressively uncompromising emphasis on conversions, often at the point of a sword. From its inception, Sikhi has remained a non-proselytizing faith, although it welcomes converts.

The 1430 pages of the Guru Granth are entirely in poetic verse. Whenever we read poetry, be it by Shakespeare, T.S. Eliot, or the verses found in the Guru Granth, a literal rendition or paraphrasing is rarely helpful. Now, half a millennium later, the rules of grammar and linguistic structure have changed. The framework of the Guru Granth is chock-full of allegories, analogies and metaphors that often appear alien, particularly to the modern Western ear and mind. The words are in the context of the culture when Sikhi arose and took shape, and both have changed over the centuries. Keep in mind that it is not easy to discern the mind of a poet in all its wizardry when it plays with words, rhythm or cadence in the cause of poesy. But that is our responsibility today.

The Guru Granth was written in many languages extant at that time. Some are from the tree of Indo-European languages like Sanskrit, Braj, Hindi, Marathi, Punjabi, etc., while others are Semitic, like Arabic and Persian. Many dialects and variations are associated with each language and find a place in Sikh scriptures. Most of the verses that comprise the Guru Granth are set to the rules of the raga system of classical Indian musicology. Much of the writing is framed in norma loquendi, the language of the common people at that time.

The Guru Granth begins with an alphanumeric – Ik Oankaar ("One Creator") – that speaks of one Creator, common to all creation, not a uniquely Jewish, Muslim, Christian, Hindu or Sikh God. The One Creator is a unique, infinite presence that pervades all. Sikhism holds that if one can see this universal connectivity, then there is no room left for distinctions in caste, creed, color, national origin or gender, etc. By definition, the Creator, being infinite, has no fixed name or address, nor any form, shape, color, size or any measurable feature or dimension that our finite language or creative faculties can capture. This clearly rejects the idea of an anthropomorphic

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Creator or a specific site, whether earthly or extraterrestrial, where God is to be located.

But religions take root here on Earth in the culture, language and habits of a people. So, context and time are critical when parsing the philosophic foundations of any faith. Sikh teachings are couched in the language, grammar, and context of time and the two cultures – Hinduism and Islam – prevalent at the time of its inception. It is predominantly in the context of Hindu idiom because that's where most converts to Sikhi came from. This is important because effective teaching, no matter the topic, is best delivered so that it resonates with the context and background of the student.

It should be kept in mind that context matters and cannot be lightly and casually translated, interpreted, understood or dismissed. Yet events and touchstones remain that define and shape us that, in a different reality, we find hard to discern and make our own.

Before we venture into the issue of Sikhi and Darwinian Evolution, we need to briefly visit the relationship between Sikhi and Science as it unfolds every day.

Sikhi & Science

In the 500 years of Sikhi's existence, there never has been a visible area of conflict between modern science and Sikh doctrine3. Given the world around us this seems like a wild pronouncement with little support.

Yes, there have been conflicts between what the ten Founder-Gurus of Sikhi taught and what the clergy of Hinduism or Islam said to the people at that same time. We have ample testimony of that in Sikh lore, history and in the scripture, the Guru Granth Sahib. From the myriad that are possible, I offer three simple but telling examples:

Early in the Guru Granth, Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh faith refers to the Hindu belief that a bull supports the Earth. (This is not much different from the ancient Greek idea that the Earth rests on the shoulder of Atlas, the giant.) Guru Nanak rejects the concept by asking who supports the bull for he, too, would have to be standing somewhere firm, wouldn't he4? And then would there be a second bull to support the first, and then a third and so on to the end of space and time.

Another parable: Early one morning, Guru Nanak came across a group of pilgrims standing in the Hindu holy river Ganges, splashing water towards the rising sun. When asked what they were trying to accomplish, they explained that the splashed water would reach their long dead ancestors and quench their thirst. They couldn't answer where exactly the long dead ancestors would be. Guru Nanak brought the absurdity of this reasoning home to them by attempting to splash water towards his crops that lay only about 150 miles west.

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The third example: Guru Nanak clearly spoke of the endless number of planets and universes in the creation that science validates today.5. Keep in mind that this was the era when Renaissance was in the offing in Europe. And Guru Nanak unequivocally states that creation emerged from a single command of the Creator.6

None of the Sikh Gurus ever railed against whatever the available experimental scientific evidence opined at that time. Why? There are two issues here. The Gurus spoke of a Creator who is beyond our finite measurements and concepts. In fact, what they said is that the Infinite cannot be captured by our finite language and tools. The Infinite can neither be fully fathomed by the intellect nor perceived entirely by our senses, but is such that our inner self can commune with it. Ergo, to define limits on what the Creator may or may not create, or how and when, is asinine chatter. Secondly, we are asked to understand this, accept our very human limitations, and come to terms with that idea.

Humans, are gifted with the ability to understand and invent tools to modify the creation that is around us. Ergo we should be moved by the courage to change the things that we can change, accept gratefully and with equanimity what we cannot change and be graced by the wisdom to know the difference. In other words, we need to function within the will of the Creator – somewhat like walking in the shadow of the Lord. In Sikh doctrine, this is called living a life in Hukum. The word "hukum" in Sikh parlance embraces two very different meanings simultaneously. Firstly, hukum literally is an order or command, and secondly, hukum is a sense of order as opposed to disorder, in a system or natural laws. Hukum, then, becomes the foundation of a creative productive life, lived entirely in the present, in the moment.

Science, Religion & Society

I see science and religion as two sides of the same true coin7.

The unfortunate divide between science and religion may be a sad reflection on the sorry state of public education in society. Science and its technology provide absolutely no answer on why I am here nor are they equipped to do so, but they strive mightily and unendingly to find order in nature, and to discover how natural processes work.

Science and technology are, by definition, amoral. What is the purpose of life, why I exist and what I should do about it, are questions that are the domains of religion and philosophy, not science.

Simply stated, science tells me how to harness nuclear energy, but it does not and cannot tell me why I should do so, or when and under what circumstances I should use it. So, science can teach us how to construct a nuclear bomb; it cannot tell

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us why we should, and to what use we should put that knowledge and skill. That is the domain of religion, ethics, and morality; these are the foundations of political philosophy. Similar concerns arise if I wish to clone a liver or a heart to help someone, or alternatively clone myself in a twisted sense of self8. It is less a matter of available technology and more critically an issue of ethics and morality – a sense of self.

The concerns of science and religion are not mutually exclusive, but are complementary. Religion can lend meaning to life, whatever the facts that science discovers about the mechanics of life itself.

History tells us so and I concede that religious insights and teachings have not always been used wisely in the cause of the common good, much as science and technology have not always contributed to such progress.

Religion, Sikhi, Darwinian Evolution & Intelligent Design

Usually, science and religion in contemporary society play in an adversarial and confrontational relationship. Some of these concerns are better parsed and framed through the lens of a 2009 Pew survey, 9 in which the scientists polled were all members of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Scientists seem to be divided on whether they believe in a higher power (51 %) or not (41%). I imagine the numbers now – six years later – are not significantly different. This must be balanced against other data: in the general population of non-scientists, about 95% of all Americans believe in a higher power or a personal God. And while 87% of scientists believe that life evolved over time via natural processes, only 32% of the public (non-scientists) believes this to be true.

The rational hooker in the divide between science and religion is that, in general, scientific biological dicta stem from a preponderance of verifiable and replicable evidence. That simple statement constitutes the scientific method at its core. Ergo, the complexity and uniqueness of humans is not satisfactorily explained or circumscribed by a theory, however overarching, if it is not always amenable to experimental evidence or rules of replication.

It is not surprising then that they offer perhaps the largest, most daring challenges to a comprehensive all-embracing model of evolution. But this is an area that rightly engages the human species and its best minds the world over.

Adding to the problem is the obvious fact that humans are a very different kettle of fish when compared to the rest of the creation around us. Humans are truly unique at many levels, as any human can plainly see. In my view, a wider conversation is needed which truly should be the bailiwick

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of pubiic intellectuals, not limited to biologists and theologians.

Even though humans are not the only animals that cannot survive or thrive alone at any time from birth to death. But the human, especially, is neither strong enough, nor fast enough, or self-sufficient. At any time, there are substantial existential threats that can easily destroy individual humans and even some smaller collectives. Their only hope for survival lies in forming larger groupings, ranging from families, clans, and communities, further on to nations. Religion, then, becomes the glue that holds the groupings together, the bonds that make human survival and progress possible.10 But the human physical limitations that create communities when coupled with their uniquely sophisticated nervous system make it possible for people to construct complex groupings, tribes and nations that make mankind the remarkably unique rulers of our world.

Is it any wonder then that in time, traditions and practices of communities – the glue that binds a people – become sacred? These then in time morph into and become religious traditions in many societies and/or secular law in others. Despite some exceptions, the major religions of mankind are millennia old. Sikhism is perhaps one of the newest of the major faiths. There are others even younger, such as the Mormons and Baha'is. But no matter how recent their antecedents, the important issue is that when we parse religious doctrine and teaching, we need to keep in mind the context when and where the religion took shape – of the times, culture, language, music and cuisine, and certainly of the ethos, friends and foes of a people. In time many, if not all, of these variables change, often dramatically.

And when we look at religious teaching, usually centuries later, we need the rational mind of an analyst wedded to a warm and joyous heart in an existence of faith.

Now, 500 years later, as I sit down to explore Sikh teachings and traditions for references to Darwinian Evolution or the complexity of Intelligent Design, I need to ensure that my translation or interpretation, though not entirely literal, is consistent with the essential core and philosophy of Sikhism. I am duty bound to warn readers that many will cavil about my view of the core of Sikh philosophy, particularly when I refer to the cycle of birth and rebirth, reincarnation and transmigration.

The concept is fundamental to the Hindu way of life and finds copious reference in Sikh scriptures as well. Perhaps I am arguing for a paradigm shift in understanding of some fundamentals. My personal view is that these issues are better understood when interpreted not so literally. I will refer to these only briefly here; details are unimportant because they are is not fundamental to our understanding of

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evolution and that is the mandate today. Turning over the applecart of practice is not my intent.

So, my bias may not necessarily be the popular view even amongst Sikhs. For example, philosophical and theological concepts in the Guru Granth are framed in the ethos of the people -- pretty much in the context and language and mythology of the Hindu culture of a certain time -- but the interpretational framework, as I see it, modifies, transforms or rejects a given practice in no uncertain terms.

Let me start with a seminal idea from Vedic traditions that may play havoc with rational thought. It begins with the assumption that there are exactly 8,400,000 species of life forms. This formulation occurs repeatedly in both Hindu and Sikh teaching. Furthermore, it asserts that, according to how we live, it is possible for us to be reborn as a higher or lower life-form, depending on how correctly we lived the current life. This dominatingly powerful idea, firmly rooted in the Indic religions, seems to lie at the core of a system of ultimate justice.

This idea comes to us from Hindu core belief. Many Sikhs, too, take this fixed number of 8,400,000 species as the literal truth. In the Guru Granth, it occurs hundreds of times. However, I think the Gurus referred to this number as I would use the word "gazillion" when speaking of a stupendously, gigantically large number in this North American culture, for instance. It is never to be interpreted as a fixed precise count. I am sure that the Gurus would not be lessened any if, some day, biological science found the exact number of life forms to be larger or smaller than 8,400,000. Nor would they be exalted if the number turned out to be exactly true.

Sikhi does not propound suspiciously exact models of a heaven or hell or a life after death. I think the interpretation of this idea in Sikh thought and practice has been mishandled; I'll return to this theme shortly.

❑

End of Part I

(To be Continued)

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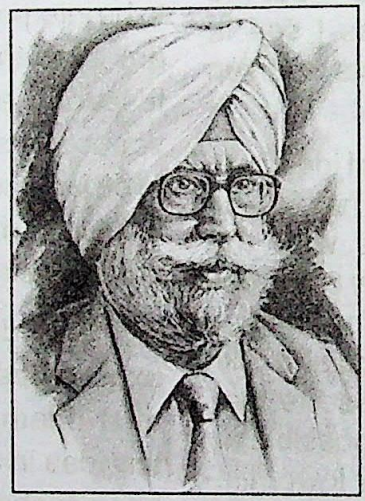
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Professor Harbans Singh : His Contribution to Sikh Studies

*AMANDEEP KAUR**

Professor Harbans Singh was a rare amalgam of scholarship, academic excellence, administrative acumen, felicitous expression and idealism, and wisdom. He was born on 6 March 1921 at Kotha Guru, the ancestral village of his mother Mrs. Roop Kaur in present day Bathinda district of the Punjab. His father Mr. Ram Lal was a revenue official with the state government. According to Dharam Singh, his mother Roop Kaur was a direct descendent of the Gurus, was a lady of deep religious convictions. This petite and graceful lady had an important role in shaping and moulding Harbans Singh's religious and moral zeitgeist and artistic sensibilities.



Education and Positions:

Harbans Singh completed his schooling from Khalsa School, Mukatsar. Though his father had desired that his son become a doctor and even admitted him to Medical school in Jalandhar but Harbans Singh was not interested in this field, and finally he joined the Khalsa College, Amritsar in 1937. In 1941, Harbans Singh graduated from this institution with honours in English and in 1943 earned his Master's in English Literature. His potentials of becoming a leader were evident from the fact that he was elected as the President of the Khalsa College Students Association. He served Khalsa College as Lecturer in English for a year (1943-1944). After that, Harbans Singh joined the Brijindra College as Head of the Department of English. From 1958-1960, he also served as Principal of Government College Muktsar. But soon he left this position to become member secretary of the Punjab University Commission which was set up under the chairmanship of Maharaja Yadwindra Singh of Patiala, for the creation of Punjabi University, Patiala in 1962.

Harbans Singh had many firsts in his life. He was the first Registrar of Punjabi University, Patiala, first Professor of Sikhism and first Head of the Guru Gobind Singh Department of Religious Studies. It was through his efforts that he persuaded the

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Punjabi University's authorities to introduce Religion as a subject of academic study at the Graduate and Post- Graduate level, and it was for the first time in India that Religion as a subject of academic disciple studied in Punjabi University, Patiala.

Scholarship:

The well-known scholar of Sikh studies Harbans Singh is highly respected in literary and social circles for his rich contribution to Sikh studies and Punjabi literary studies. Harbans Singh's contribution to Punjabi literary studies includes his writings such as Aspects of Punjabi Literature, Bhai Vir Singh, Bhai Vir Singh: The Poet of the Sikhs, Mahindi and other short stories. Now the question arises why Harbans Singh became intensely interested in Sikh history. The reason is that early in his career, Harbans Singh got interested in the Punjabi literary renaissance, though he was a graduate and post-graduate student of English literature. The Punjabi studies were no doubt his first love and he never completely forgotten it, but he had dedicated his prime years of life, the days of enthusiastic scholarship to enriching the field of Sikh studies. Harbans Singh had friendly relations with some of the prominent historians and personalities of his time, the most valuable in this connection were Ganda Singh, Fauja Singh, Gurbachan Singh Talib. Whenever they met in the conferences, academic affairs they discussed on topics of Sikh history and helped each other with their ravishing knowledge of Sikh history. Harbans Singh learned so much from these discussions that the impact of these personalities on him is widely known. He studied at Khalsa College, Amritsar and taught there for one year. Khalsa College is a premier Sikh institution which had its zealous spirit to raise Sikh history at the peak of highest glory. He was a product of the creative ferment enlivened in the Khalsa College, Amritsar in the early forties of the twentieth century imbibed early in his career as engaging interest in and abiding love for letters . The impact of the Singh Sabha's literary activities particularly the Tat Khalsa and its prominent personalities like Bhai Vir Singh also had great influence upon him. With the impact of this environment, Harbans Singh started writing Sikh history with penetrating insight and meticulous thoroughness. Also, he acquired a unique prestige in the world of learning. He was so devoted to the cause of Sikh studies that he never succumbed to the pressure of physical disability or emotional distress and personal tragedies that had happened during the last few years of his life.

Encyclopedia of Sikhism:

Harbans Singh was a very distinguished scholar who wrote with zest and vision. His style is lucid, terse and language happened to be plain but forced. Harbans Singh's contribution to Sikh studies with his magnum opus Encyclopedias of Sikhism was great. No doubt, we have already possessed the monumental work, Gurshabad Ratnakar Mahan Kosh the creation of an industrious, the celebrate Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha. The

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work of Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha was first published in 1930. It has been periodically reprinted by the Language Department, Government of Punjab, but had no new entries after the author's death in 1938. It is in the Punjabi Language, therefore, not accessible to those without facility in the Punjabi Language. The celebration of the three-hundredth anniversary of the birth of Guru Gobind Singh, which came off in 1966-1967 bequeathed to Patiala two permanent monuments one was Guru Gobind Singh Bhawan and the second was a Department of Comparative Religions. This Department at Punjabi University, Patiala going to be the first academic setup of its kind in India, where religion in the academic field had been considered but a highly respected subject. When working for the courses of study and syllabus for the various traditions of religion, it was soon felt by Harbans Singh that Sikhism is the modern religion of the world, but it was the least well served by existing literary and historical methods. The burgeoning of interest in the study of religion and Sikh religion brought to light the grave paucity of materials, especially the lack of any reference work on Sikhism.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, many Sikhs went to the western countries. In a short period, they became familiar to the western people. The western people also wanted to know not only their motherland but also to know their culture, religion, history, and traditions. Because of the world- wide Sikh diaspora and their increasing contacts with the non- Sikh world, Sikhs and non- Sikhs alike needed an authoritative reference work on Sikhs and Sikhism in English. It was also a time when Sikhism began his familiarity in the Western educational institutions and in the western academics or its scholars. So, it was felt by the Sikh scholars that there was an urgent need for a comprehensive reference work or book which satisfied those who wanted to be familiar with Sikh Guru's, Sikh history, Sikh institutions, Sikh historians, Sikh traditions, culture. At a time when Sikhism is attracting world - wide notice, a reference work embracing all essential facets of this vibrant faith is a singular contribution to the world of knowledge . According to Dharm Singh, Harbans Singh also felt that "an Encyclopedia of Sikh religion in the English language was needed because Sikhism which had earlier generated mere curiosity among the Western scholars had now become the topic of serious study by scholars outside the tradition and unfamiliar with the Punjabi Language." After knowing that situation, Harbans Singh prepared a blueprint of the Encyclopedia project and submitted to the Punjabi University's authorities, and the university felt it an honor to assign him this project. Harbans Singh took it over willingly and has worked on it with a rare single-mindedness. It is not an easy task to write an Encyclopedia of religion. It is indeed a formidable undertaking to prepare an Encyclopedia of a discipline in which not many lexicons did exist. To develop an Encyclopedia of the Sikhism becomes more difficult when it came to interpretations of its theological doctrines

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and concepts. So finally, the Punjabi University, Patiala initiated the project of a comprehensive Encyclopedia of Sikhism in the English language in 1966. After long arduous and industry of Harbans Singh the first volume comprising 608 pages and covering letters from A to D of the alphabet, appeared in December 1992 and was formally released by Shankar Dayal Sharma, President of India. As publication work on the press-copy of the first volume of the Encyclopedia was underway, Harbans Singh suffered a paralytic stroke in 1989 and his beloved wife Kailash Kaur who was deeply religious and a God–fearing lady died on 12 November 1992 (She was married to Harbans Singh on 23rd April 1944). But despite his physical disabilities and personal tragedies, Harbans Singh completely involved in the challenging task. The second volume comprising 576 pages and contains entries from E to L of the alphabet, appeared in January 1996. The third volume comprising 516 pages and containing letters from M to R of the alphabet, appeared in April 1997 and lastly the fourth volume comprising 570 pages and contains entries from S to Z of the alphabet, appeared in November 1998. The completion of the fourth volume was an occasion for real celebration, but the man who had conceived, planned and accomplished this stupendous task was no longer with the rejoicing committee. The Editor – in - Chief Harbans Singh left for destination unknown world on 30 May 1998. After the fourth volume's publication, the whole set of four volumes were released by the Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpai on 5 March 1999. The four volumes describe the Sikh faith and community in their myriad forms today and cover the 540 years of Sikh history. The whole four volumes of the Encyclopedia of Sikhism gave incredible knowledge about Sikhism. They included Sikh Gurus and places of various Punjab Gurdwaras belonging to Sikh Gurus. They narrated foreigners especially scholars who came to Punjab during Ranjit Singh's period and who wrote about Sikhs and Bhagats who had their Bani in Guru Granth Sahib. Additional entries covered eighteenth-century Sikh personalities, twentieth century political and religious movements, the different diversities of Sikhism like Sehajdhari Sikhs, Dasam Granth, Rahetnamas, Raags of Gurbani, etc. Each entry was documented with bibliography references.

The Encyclopedia includes nearly 4000 entries dealing with almost every aspect of the life of the Sikh community, its history, philosophy, culture, traditions, politics, art, architecture and religion . Harbans Singh knew that single-minded devotion was necessary for the successful completion of this dream project. It was an arduous project which required precision, thoroughness, and meticulousness in every stage of its completion. He made his mind to free himself from all the administrative activities. He relinquished the chairmanship of the department to devote himself wholly to this project. He worked on his dream project like rishies's with a sense of

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devotion. Harbans Singh dedicated to this project his whole-hearted endeavor, and no other aim, desire, worldly temptation; physical disability would come in his way. His daughter Nikky-Guninder Kaur Singh also said about Harbans Singh's devotion to complete this major work as "my father's life had been entirely dedicated to Sikh scholarship, and even during his very last weeks, he immersed himself completing in finishing his four volumes Encyclopedia of Sikhism." He literally kept death waiting till the completion of this dream projected and breathed his last only after he had gone enough the final proofs of the volume. Despite Harbans Singh, many able researchers, historians had made their able contributions to the final stage of the Encyclopedia of Sikhism. Harbans Singh contacted almost 300 scholars of the world to make their entries in the Encyclopedia, and he rectified their entries. His knowledge, wide-ranging contacts with academic scholars and his dedication all resulted in the publication of the four volumes Encyclopedia of Sikhism. After its publication, every reader of the Encyclopedia, though he is a Sikh or a non-Sikh, living in Punjab or West, praised its authenticity.

Contributions to Sikh Studies:

Professor Harbans Singh's contribution to Sikh studies was exceptional with the completion of the Encyclopedia of Sikhism that he compiled, supervised and edited until it was published by the Punjabi University. Also, he contributed to Sikh studies with his other publications such as Heritage of the Sikhs, Guru Gobind Singh, Guru Tegh Bahadur, Perspectives on Guru Nanak, Maharaja Ranjit Singh,

Aspects of Punjabi Literature, Bhai Vir Singh, and The Berkeley Lectures on Sikhism. He published many scholarly papers in the national and international journals. He was a popular speaker at many national and international conferences throughout the world. In 1964 he was invited by the United States Government to study the administrative functioning and educational system of universities in the US. He compiled his impressions of this visit in the form of a book Higher Education in America (1966), which has been appreciated for its informative and educative value and its insights on continuing education – this last became the cornerstone of the Evening Studies program at the Punjabi University. Similarly, he spent several months in Belgium to research on ancient religious literature.

In fact, Harbans Singh with his writings, erudite, friendly nature, scholarly mind and great devotion towards Sikh religion has attained the rank of a unique personality in the Sikh world and Sikh scholarship. Towards the completion of his works, he committed his unwearied diligence and passion toward setting new standards in the Sikh scholarship producing the reliable works, particularly for the international audience. In fact, the Encyclopedia of Sikhism is a boon not only for scholars who want to do

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research on Sikh history or Sikhism but also for those who want to be familiar with Sikhism. By this work, Harbans Singh held in such high esteem and reverence in the world of scholarship, especially in the field of Sikh studies. So, we can say that the Encyclopedia of Sikhism was Harbans Singh's magnum opus project, he had devoted two decades of his life.

Conclusion

Soon the world community of Sikh scholars will celebrate the twentieth anniversary of Prof. Harbans Singh's Akal Chalana, the journey to the Timeless. He left his mortal life on 30 May 1998 that caused an enormous void in the field of Sikh scholarship. In fact, he will be remembered as an institution by himself. He dedicated his scholarly wisdom and Sikhi spirit to many causes and institutions, particularly to the Punjabi University, Patiala. He worked exceptionally hard and with exceptional diligence to collate, edit and publish the first ever Encyclopedia of Sikhism, published in English. The Punjabi University Patiala honored him posthumously by prefixing his name, Professor Harbans Singh, to the Department of the Encyclopedia of Sikhism. Guru Nanak Dev University gave him honorary degree of Doctor of Letters. He was also honored with the prestigious recognition by the Khalsa Panth with the Order of the Khalsa recognition at the Khalsa Tercentenary Celebration in 1999. ❑

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The Demand for Return of Koh-E-Noor

*Maj. Balbir Singh Bhasin (Retd.)**

For a long time I have been reading about the precious diamond Koh-e-Noor (The light of mountains). In Afghan language, the Koh means Paharh or mountain. The controversies regarding the ownership of the Diamond are not new. In 2006, Pakistan claimed that since the Precious stone was surrendered on the soil of Pakistan (though the idea of Pakistan was not even conceived in the womb of Mother India), so it should come back to Pakistan. Prime Minister of Pakistan Zulfikar Ali Bhutto promised his countrymen in August 1976 that he will bring back the precious-priceless- Koh-e-Noor to Pakistan. He wrote a letter to British Govt. which was ultimately (and very rightly) rejected by the British Empire. U.K. nixed Pak claim to Koh-e-Noor.



I have been writing to Her-majesty Queen Elizabeth since 2006 directly and via British High Commission, New Delhi, with a copy to all the concerned authorities. But unfortunately, except the Secretary Shiromni Gurudwara Committee (Harbeant Singh) who replied twice (in November, 2006 and January, 2007), no one took the trouble, even to acknowledge my letters.

I was dismayed for not receiving any support for my stand (including the Secretary, SGPC who twice appreciated my stand and assured of the support) came forward to sit with me on Dharna.

I have also written a letter to the Editor Times of India with reference to the news item Published on December 30, 2006.

In the meantime, many shocking and surprising statements have come into light (specially the submissions of the Solicitor General in the Apex Court on behalf of the Union Govt.) whichhave shaken my faith and efforts for the recovery of the prestigious Diamond- Koh-e-Noor.

But I am of the opinion that apart from the stories (Historical and the so-called

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Concocted), that where the Koh-e-Noor was located, in how many hands it has exchanged or grasped by force or by the willful gift, the final truth has not been denied by any person that the last owner of the Koh-e-Noor was Maharaja Ranjit Singh after whose death,Kunwar Duleep Singh (his son) got the legal possession of the Diamond, or he inherited it from his father.

It is also an accepted truth that the Britishers took Kunwar Duleep Singh with them to England (after the British-Sikhs Battle) when he was a teenaged boy (10 yrs or 11 yrs) who was wearing the Koh-e-Noor on his Turban-like his Late father Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

The whole episode ends with the tragic end of Kunwar Duleep Singh (in suspicious circumstances) and the Britishers took away or snatched the Koh-e-Noor from his dead body. The corpses were buried, either in accordance with Indian rituals or British customs.

It is also a sad truth that mortal remains of Late Kunwar Duleep Singh were not even sent to India and his mother-Rani Jinda died in shock.

My appel to the Highest seat of Judiciary (the Supreme Court), the Honest persons sitting at the Home of Affairs in the Union Govt., the Punjab Govt. and to the Five Singh Sahabans of the Five Takhts and also the patriotic citizens of the country is to bring back the prestigious and precious Koh-e-Noor (now the prestige of the country) and keep it either in the Sikh Museum in Amritsar or in the National Museum of the country.

Lastly, I pray to Her Majesty- The Queen of British Empire, Queen Elizabeth who has great regards for Sikhs and Sikh's Holy Shrines (which is proved from the fact of her recent visit to the Gurudwara in London to offer her respect to Holy Guru Granth Sahib on her 90th Birthday) to handover the Gem to the Indian community, because I know the judicial fights will not solve the problem (though I have great Regards for Indian and British Judiciary).

FOR BASIC KNOWLEDGE, BOLD COMMENT
READ
THE SIKH REVIEW

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Who Really Owns the Koh-i-Noor Diamond?

GURCHARAN SINGH KULIM*

Recently, we read about the very unrealistic "demand" for the Koh-i-Noor diamond to be returned to the Sikhs. A number of mixed reactions, were observed. They were mostly based on no understanding of politics, nor of the history, of the diamond.

The issue of the Koh-i-Noor diamond rears it's head from time to time, largely since 1984. No doubt there is a lot of interest over the issue, there is little understanding of the circumstances around it.

Over the years, although the Koh-i-Noor diamond is no longer the largest or most expensive, but it remains one of the most heatedly discussed topic to this day.

It's infamous colourful history begins long long time before Maharajah Ranjit Singh-Shere i-Punjab – the Lion of Punjab, where in his treasury it remained the most treasured and magnificiently valuable single item.

In a few short years, after Maharajah Ranjit Singh's untimely demise, it came to be owned by the infant King, Maharajah Duleep Singh son of MahrajahRanjit Singh.

The British, after four fierce battles, eventually defeated the powerful Sikh army, more so through treachery than on the battlefield, took control of the Sikh State Raj, and the infant king MahrajahDuleep Singh. As part of the war reparations, took away the diamond Koh-i-Noor, and presented it to Queen Victoria "on behalf of the people of India"

To this day, it remains embedded in the Royal Crown of the Queen and is kept with Royal Crown Jewels, in London.

Fast backward in history

The Koh-i-Noor ~ "Mountain of Light"; is a 105 carat (21.6 g) diamond that was once the largest known diamond in the world. The Koh-i-noor originated in the state of Andhra Pradesh in India, belonged to various Indian and Persian rulers who fought bitterly over it at various points in history, and seized it as a spoil of war, became part of the British Crown Jewels when British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli proclaimed Queen Victoria "Empress of India" in 1877.

Like all significant jewels, the Koh-i-noor has its share of legends. It is reputed to bring misfortune or death to any male who wears or owns it. Conversely, it is reputed to bring good luck to female owners.

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The origins of the diamond are unclear. Many early stories of great diamonds in southern India exist, but it is hard to establish which one was the Koh-i-noor, if any.

According to some sources, the Koh-i-Noor was originally found more than 5000 years ago, and is mentioned in ancient Sanskrit writings under the name Syamantaka. Hindus believe that Krishna himself obtained the diamond from Jambavantha, whose daughter Jambavati later married Krishna. The legend says that the diamond was stolen from Krishna as he lay sleeping. Another source claims that the diamond was discovered in a river bed in 3200 BCE.

Historical evidence suggests that the Koh-i-noor originated in Golkonda kingdom, in Hyderabad state of Andhra Pradesh, one of the world's earliest diamond producing regions. South Indian folklore is definite in claiming a local origin for the stone. It is certain that the stone was mined in India, as until the 19th century India was the only place in the world where diamonds were known. It is likely that the diamond was mined in the Kollur mines in the present day Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh.

The Khilji dynasty at Delhi ended in 1320 C.E and Ghiyasud din Tughluq Shah ascended the Delhi throne. Tughlaq sent his son Ulugh Khan in 1323 C.E to defeat the Kakatiya king Prataparudra. Ulugh Khan's raid was repulsed but he returned in a month with a larger and determined army. The unprepared army of Warangal was defeated. The loot, plunder and destruction of Warangal continued for months. Loads of gold, diamonds, pearls and ivory were carried away to Delhi on elephants and camels. The Koh-i-noor diamond was part of the bounty. From then onwards, the stone passed through the hands of successive rulers of the Delhi sultanate, finally passing to Babur, the first Mughal emperor, in 1526.

The first confirmed note historically mentioning the Koh-i-noor by an identifiable name dates from 1526. Babur mentions in his memoirs, the Baburnama, that the stone had belonged to an un-named Rajah of Malwa in 1294. Babur held the stone's value to be such as to feed the whole world for two days. The Baburnama recounts how this Rajah of Malwa was compelled to yield his prized possession to Alaud din Khilji; it was then owned by a succession of dynasties that ruled the Delhi sultanate, finally coming into the possession of Babur himself in 1526, following his victory over the last ruler of that kingdom. However, the Baburnama was written c.1526-30; Babur's source for this information is unknown, and he may have been recounting the hearsay of his day. He did not at that time call the stone by its present name, but despite some debate about the identity of 'Babur's Diamond' it seems likely that it was the stone which later became known as Kohinoor.

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The Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan - famous for building the TajMahal - had the stone placed into his ornate Peacock Throne. When Shah Jahan's son, Aurangazeb, put his ailing father under house arrest at nearby Agra Fort, legend has it that he had the Koh-i-noor stationed against a window so that Shah Jahan could look at the stone and see the Taj reflected in it. There it stayed until the invasion of Nadir Shah in 1739 and the sacking of Agra and Delhi. Along with the Peacock Throne, he also carried off the Koh-i-noor to Persia in 1739. It was allegedly Nadir Shah who exclaimed Koh-i-Noor! when he finally managed to obtain the famous stone, and this is how the stone gained its present name. There is no reference to this name before 1739.

The valuation of the Koh-i-noor is given in the legend that one of Nadir Shah's consorts supposedly said, 'If a strong man should take five stones, and throw one north, one south, one east, and one west, and the last straight up into the air, and the space between filled with gold and gems, that would equal the value of the Koh-i-noor'

After the assassination of Nadir Shah in 1747 it came into the hands of Ahmed Shah Abdali of Afghanistan. In 1830, Shah Shuja, the deposed ruler of Afghanistan, managed to flee with the Kohinoor diamond. He then came to Lahore, the capital of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, where it was given to the Sikh Maharaja (King) of Punjab Ranjit Singh, in which after, in return, Maharaja Ranjit Singh was able to persuade the East India Company to lend their troops and win back the Afghan throne for Shah Shuja.

Maharajah Ranjit Singh crowned himself as the ruler of Punjab and it is claimed by many Indian writers that Maharajah Ranjit Singh willed the Koh-i-noor to Jagannath Temple in Orissa while on his deathbed in 1839. But there was dispute about this last-minute testament, and in any case it was not executed, neither factual history provides any facts.

On March 29, 1849, the British flag was hoisted on the citadel of Lahore and the Punjab was formally proclaimed to be part of the British Empire in India. One of the terms of the Treaty of Lahore, the legal agreement formalising this occupation, was as follows: The gem called the Koh-i-Noor which was taken from Shah Shuja-ul-Mulk by Maharajah Ranjit Singh shall be surrendered by the Maharajah of Lahore to the Queen of England.

The Governor-General in charge for the ratification of this treaty was Lord Dalhousie. More than anyone, Dalhousie was responsible for the British acquiring the Koh-i-Noor, in which he continued to show great interest for the rest of his life. Dalhousie's work in India was sometimes controversial, and his acquisition of the diamond, amongst many other things, was

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criticised by some contemporary British commentators. Although some suggested that the diamond should have been presented as a gift to the Queen, it is clear that Dalhousie felt strongly that the stone was a spoil of war, and treated it accordingly. Writing to his friend Sir George Cooper in August of 1849, he stated this: The Court [of the East India Company] you say, are ruffled by my having caused the Maharajah to cede to the Queen the Koh-i-noor; while the 'Daily News' and my Lord Ellenborough [Governor-General of India, 1841-44] are indignant because I did not confiscate everything to her Majesty... "my motive was simply this: that it was more for the honour of the Queen that the Koh-i-noor should be surrendered directly from the hand of the conquered prince into the hands of the sovereign who was his conqueror, than it should be presented to her as a gift -- which is always a favour -- by any joint-stock company among her subjects. So the Court ought to feel proud of the subjects.

Dalhousie arranged that the diamond should be "presented" by, Maharajah Duleep Singh, to Queen Victoria in 1851. The presentation of the Koh-i-Noor to Queen Victoria was the latest in the long history of transfers of the stone as a spoil of war.

The British public were given a chance to see the Koh-i-Noor when the Great Exhibition was staged in Hyde Park, London in 1851. The correspondent of The Times reported: "The Koh-i-Noor is at present decidedly the lion of the Exhibition. A mysterious interest appears to be attached to it, and now that so many precautions have been restored to, and so much difficulty attends its inspection, the crowd is enormously enhanced, and the policemen at either end of the covered entrance have much trouble in restraining the struggling and impatient multitude. For some hours yesterday there were never less than a couple of hundred persons waiting their turn of admission, and yet, after all, the diamond does not satisfy. Either from the imperfect cutting or the difficulty of placing the lights advantageously, or the immovability of the stone itself, which should be made to revolve on its axis, few catch any of the brilliant rays it reflects when viewed at a particular angle"

This disappointment in the appearance of the stone was shared by many. In 1852, under the personal supervision of Victoria's consort, Prince Albert, the diamond was cut from 186 1/16 carats (37.21 g) to its current 105.602 carats (21.61 g), to increase its brilliance. Albert consulted widely, took enormous pains, and spent some £8,000 on the operation, which reduced the weight of the stone by a huge 42% - but nevertheless Albert was still dissatisfied with the result. The stone was mounted in a tiara with more than two thousand other diamonds.

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Later the stone was to be used as the centerpiece of the crown of the Queens consort of the United Kingdom. Queen Alexandra was the first to use the stone, followed by Queen Mary. In 1936, the stone was set into the crown of the new Queen Elizabeth (later known as the Queen Mother), wife of King George VI. In 2002, the crown rested atop her coffin as she lay in state.

Given the long and bloody history of the diamond, there are many countries with a claim on it. In 1976, Pakistani prime minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto asked British prime minister Jim Callaghan for the Koh-i-Noor to be returned to Pakistan. The prime minister replied to Mr Bhutto with a polite "No", and British diplomats in the countries likely to counter this claim were asked to lobby to 'kill the story'. Other claims have been made by India, the Taliban regime of Afghanistan, and Iran. As of 2007, the gem remains in the Tower of London. The Sikhs, with no state of their too have been actively claiming it, sometimes thrown in between arguments between UK and India, and other times with India.

In "Tooth and Claw", an episode of the 2006 series of Doctor Who set in 1879, the Koh-i-Noor diamond was used by the Doctor to save Queen Victoria from a werewolf. In the story, the reason for Prince Albert cutting down the diamond was to try and make it a suitable prism for a light chamber designed to trap the werewolf. The episode was first broadcast in the UK on 22 April 2006.

In one of the George MacDonald Fraser "Flashman" novels, Flashman and the Mountain of Light (published in 1990), the Koh-i-Noor diamond forms part of the backdrop to the storyline, set during the First Anglo-Sikh War as fought between 1845 and 1846.

In Henry David Thoreau's book Walden, the appeal of the Koh-i-Noor diamond is mentioned on page 137 to make a point regarding human's quest for material goods.

In Hugh Antoine D'Arcy's poem, "The Face on the Barroom Floor" in [1887], the vagabond describes the woman that led to his ruin with the phrase, "...With eyes that would beat the Koh-i-Noor, and a wealth of chestnut hair..."

In James Joyce's "Ulysses", in the section written in dialogue, it is mentioned in his stage directions that "Bloom holds up his right hand on which sparkles the Koh-i-Noor diamond." Kohenor, Light Mountain is a painting by Shane Rickman. ❑

Farid, if thou hast discretion,
Note not with a blackmark
The ill deeds of thy neighbour,
Look first in thy own heart.

[SGGS: 1378]

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Academic Freedom, Sikh Chairs : Anne Murphy's Thesis

*Dr. Sukhmander Singh**

Abstract

A brief examination of Academic Freedom is presented in the context of works by Sikh Studies Chairs and as a critical review of Anne Murphy's book is included as well. Due regard to the sensitive matters cautioned by academic freedom has not been paid to in their works.

Academic freedom in the universities is meant to encourage research scholarships even on controversial topics without the fear of reprisal. This has also been interpreted as a freedom to challenge established traditions/history/indoctrinated messages. However, according to Gary A. Olson, "because academic freedom is specifically intended to foster the free exchange of ideas within a community of scholars, it does not protect us from other types of utterances and behavior such as slander or libel," (Olson, 2009, 2015).

According to the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), "our special position in the community imposes special obligation" (AAUP, 1970). AAUP in their 1970 Interpretive Comments on the 1940 Statement of the Principles of Academic Freedom as it related to religions stated, "Teachers are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject-but they should be careful not to introduce into their teaching controversial matter which has no relation to their subject. Limitations of academic freedom because of religious or other aims of the institution should be clearly stated at the time of appointment." It may be recalled that such limitations were stated or implied at the time of establishment of Sikh Chair at University of British Columbia .For example in the clause 2 of the Memorandum of Understanding between University of British Columbia and Federation of Sikh Societies of Canada (1985), it is stated that "All instruction and research shall be in keeping with the established academic standards and every possible effort shall be made to present the teachings and practices of Sikhism in an accurate manner ." When truth is stretched and inaccuracy creeps in to hurt doctrine

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message and hence the feeling of a community, it is clearly a violation of the terms agreed upon in the MOU.

With regards to racist speech, Charles Lawrence III, a graduate of Haverford and YaleLawSchool then teaching at Stanford Law School, advocated restrictions on it (Charles R. Lawrence, 1990, 1993). Recently, there has been an increase in the numbers of harassment incidents related to race and gender issues on campuses across the nation. At my university, there is now a mandatory training requirement for all employees to prevent such incidents. For example, as pointed out by Doug Bennett, President Emeritus of Earlham College, in his blog (2011), one University's policy began as follows, "Discriminatory harassment includes conduct (oral, written, graphic or physical) directed against any person or group of persons because of their race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability or veteran's status and that has the purpose or reasonably foreseeable effect of creating offensive, demeaning, intimidating, or hostile environment for that person or group of persons."

All of the above emphasizes that academic freedom has limits to it. Accordingly, if history is manipulated and truth stretched to arrive at a disturbing conclusion against the treasured traditions/ fundamental doctrine of a religion, then it cannot be accepted under the rubric of academic freedom. At times one wonders if the research by the Sikh studies chairs who have been obsessed with history as to how and when any practice came about has been of any merit. How they kept splitting hairs on this for over 15 years with a good amount of financial resources is beyond comprehension. As such, their research to fit in the McLeodian mold has created more fog than clarity regarding the universal appeal of teachings embodied in Sri Guru Granth Sahib and Sikh identity. Granted, it is appreciable that these chairs have taught Sikhism/Sikh studies to many of their students, yet their scholarly presentations are often dry and lack the genuine appeal which a truly learned and dedicated scholar of Sikh studies/Sikh faith can make to the American audience.

Is this one of the reasons that Sikhs remain misunderstood in America? What, if any, have our academic scholars done against the mistaken identity crisis Sikhs are going through?

Dr. Ann Murphy is an academically trained scholar of Sikhism currently based at the University of British Columbia. Her book based upon her thesis appears to have included materials to overly stretch the truth about Sikh spiritually and Sikh identity. Starting with McLeod's works, attempts have been consistently made to misinterpret, distort or even denigrate Sikhism and to destroy Sikh identity. This has been done very cleverly by first

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confusing the readers by selective use of historical or anthropological material in order to construct a thesis to blur or dilute Sikh identity. It appears that one of the latest of such attempts is Anne Murphy's book, The Materiality of Past: History and Representation in Sikh Tradition. Why would she use resources which are controversial and not considered reliable in the Sikh world? For example, she would quote Ruchi Ram Sahni to make a point. A critical examination of her thesis upon which her book is based is briefly presented below.

It goes to Anne Murphy's credit that she travelled extensively in Punjab in pursuit of her works to visit places related to Sikh history and to collect and study large amounts of material about Sikh religion. She photographed sacred artifacts. All these were the basis of her analysis and hence her book. However, she spent great amounts of time and space in her book to write about some insignificant matters which she dug out in her research. Even the choice of words or terminology is complex, confusing or unconventional, if not directly misleading.

The methods and materials applied by her are characteristically Eurocentric, and the methodologies used are relevant to Christian ideology where scripture is developed as a result of history and culture; such matters are inapplicable to Sikhism where scripture is revelatory and authenticated by the prophet himself. She does not draw or quote from Guru Granth Sahib itself, the fountain of Sikhism and the history of the Guru period. How can a study on Sikhism and Sikh identity be considered objective without adequate reference to Guru Granth Sahib and without acknowledging its pivotal role in shaping the Sikh spirituality and the Sikh identity? Sound historical basis of Sikh identity are essentially ignored by her. Some of the authentic works of Sikh writings of the period she mentions are not used as a basis for her writings. Max Arthur Macauliffe's work is not even quoted once.

In her attempt to present a materialistic interpretation, she might have crossed limits of academic freedom by distorting and confusing facts. She labels Sikh culture as purely materialistic. According to her, Sikh scriptures, gurdwaras, and Khalsa are all materials and hold no spiritual significance. Siṇgh Sabha was formed to counter the challenges of the AryaSamajis missionaries, but Anne Murphy distorts Singh Sabha's works to paint an extremely biased and materialistic picture of Sikh identity.

In the 19th century study of the Sikhs, she chooses, just as Oberoi did, to ignore the fact that real Sikhs (Tat Khalsa) were driven underground due to the atrocities and suppression by the British. The British did not give the Sikhs rahit or separate identity; these were prescribed by the Gurus. The British, however, did not discourage them

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because they saw that the Khalsa-discipline made excellent soldiers, and had a tradition of glory and valor. Refusal to see these plain facts in history is deplorable. So is the publication of the book by Anne Murphy is regrettable because it undermines history and does not materially add to knowledge.

Conclusion

Insensitivity shown by works of Sikh Studies Chairs and more recently by Anne Murphy's thesis towards the treasured traditions and doctrine message of Sikhism and Sikh identity are deeply regrettable and are beyond what the principle of Academic Freedom allows. ❑

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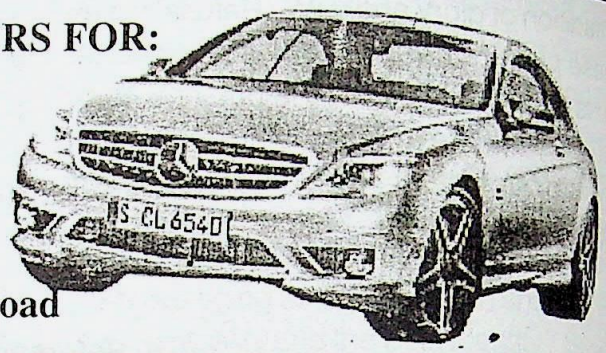
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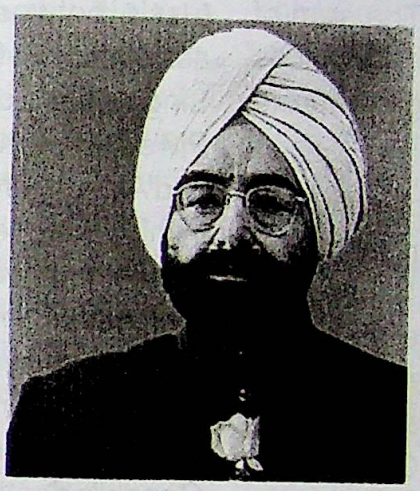
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The Giani and the Sea of Changes

*K C Singh**

Assertiveness hasn't often been a presidential trait. But, as Zail Singh showed in 1987, it can be learnt.



As the sun sets on a forgettable PratibhaPatil presidency, which comes to an end on July 25, speculation mounts on who will succeed her. Veteran parliamen-tarian Piloo Mody, speaking to us, the 1974 civil services batch, at the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration, Mussoorie, four decades ago, said the best address in Lutyens' Delhi was Rashtrapati Bhavan, on Raisina Hill, but it was reserved for a "rubber stamp".

The president's office is fashioned after the British sovereign, who, since the Magna Carta in 1215 and the English Bill of Rights of 1689, has progressively ceded power to Parliament. The Fixed Term Parliament Act of 2011 even eliminated the sovereign's power to dissolve the House. The Indian president's powers are enshrined in the Constitution, though circumscribed by conventions, precedents and amendments. The president, however, names the prime minister, following an election or the resignation of an incumbent, significant in the coalition government era. He also has, to quote Walter Bagehot on the British sovereign, "the right to be consulted, the right to encourage and the right to warn". The prime minister's corresponding duty (under Article 78) is to inform the president of all decision is submitted for cabinet consideration.

Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the first and only two-term president, wrote in March 1950 to prime minister Nehru, enquiring if the president could act independently of the aid and advice of the council of ministers. Attorney-general M.C. Setalvad pronounced that, like the British sovereign, he must never do so. Indira Gandhi codified this in 1976 (the 42nd constitution amendment) during the Emergency. The succeeding Janata Party regime ameliorated it partially

The writer, a former diplomat, is working on a book on the first seven months of 1987, during which president- prime minister relations were crucially tested. [Courtesy: Outlook]

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in 1978 with the 44th amendment, allowing the president to return any decision of the council for reconsideration once.

Notably, the presidential oath enjoins him to "preserve, protect and defend" the Constitution and the law. The prime minister's oath merely prescribes true faith and allegiance to it. Presidents have mostly abided by their oath. The sum of the powers mentioned above, in the hands of an astute and morally upright person, is considerable.

Out of non-politicians, two presidents emerge. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan's term spanned the calamitous 1962 Sino-Indian conflict, the deaths of prime ministers Jawaharlal Nehru and Lal Bahadur Shastri, the inconclusive 1965 India-Pakistan war, and the ascension of Indira Gandhi. He reportedly nudged Nehru to drop defence minister Krishna Menon, and chided the newly constituted government of Indira Gandhi in his last Republic Day address in 1966. Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam (not with standing his overestimated scientific credentials) mesmerised the youth with a vision of 21st century India. Besides, his adversity-to-success saga has such a resonance that it inspires many people even today.

To consolidate power, Indira Gandhi used the 1969 presidential election to split the Congress and eject the old guard. Her presidents, symbolised by V.V. Giri and Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, reflected a captive presidency. Re-elected in 1980, she chose GianiZail Singh, her home minister and former Punjab CM, for presidency in 1982. Despite his initial remark that he was willing to sweep floors at Indira Gandhi's bidding, he ironically left his post much strengthened.

Preceding his selection was a gruelling tussle between Indira Gandhi's special assistant R.K. Dhawan, who supported Zail Singh's candidature, and M.L. Fotedar, the PM's political aide, blessed by Rajiv Gandhi and Arun Nehru, who was opposed to it. The Punjab insurgency, Singh's backward class origins and loyalty to Indira Gandhi favoured him, although the sulking Kashmiri lobby sought to test Zail Singh's loyalty by demanding an undated resignation letter. These fault-lines resurfaced after Indira Gandhi's death.

Zail Singh first asserted himself in 1984, meeting N.T. Rama Rao, wrongly dismissed as chief minister of Andhra Pradesh by the governor, reportedly on cues from Mrs. Gandhi's aides, and his TDP MLAS in Rashtrapati Bhavan, despite the prime minister's reservations. NTR got his post back, a favour he never forgot. And India is again witnessing constitutional malfeasance, as Jagamohan Reddy is arrested by the CBI to stymie his campaigning. An investigative agency's interference, once the electoral process is under way, is reprehensible and requires presidential intervention.

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The year 1984 was also the year of Operation Bluestar, begun without the president's knowledge. The same year, Indira Gandhi was assassinated and the anti-Sikh riots took place, during which the president's repeated attempts to locate home minister P.V. Narasimha Rao were unsuccessful till late at night! He was distressed as no president had ever been. Had he reacted emotionally and resigned after Operation Bluestar, he would have been worshiped in Punjab. Instead, he sided with the nation, rising above religion and province. This is often forgotten by his critics. After the Delhi pogrom, he was determined to stay, realising he was the sole buffer between a beleaguered community and a political leadership.

The repatriation of I.S. Bindra, the president's only joint secretary, to Punjab and R.K. Dhawan's purging from the PMO indicated that Rajiv Gandhi was relying on elements inimical to the president. Rajiv Gandhi soon abandoned conventions and constitutional provisions on PM-president relations, including informing the president on affairs of the state. The president's foreign visits were frozen for two years. Calls on the president for periodic briefings ended. If Indira Gandhi held the presidency captive, her son believed none existed. It was a unique challenge.!

Zail Singh waited till the tide turned in 1987. From January, the sacking of the foreign secretary, an unpopular Postal Bill allowing mail interception (on which the president sat), the Congress's electoral rout in Haryana, the Bofors scandal, the sidelining of Arun Nehru on health grounds and the resignation of defence minister V.P. Singh shifted the advantage to him. He rallied the opposition, commenced consultations with disaffected Congressmen, and consulted legal luminaries on the president's residual powers to dismiss a government that was covering up corruption and devoid of moral authority. This interpretation was strongly endorsed by V.C. Shukla, a former Indira loyalist, and Ashoke Kumar Sen, a law minister in Nehru's cabinet. To visit Rashtrapati Bhavan, they bundled into my personal car, fearful of the Intelligence Bureau, hardly presenting the image of valiant Rajiv-challengers.

The president kept bandying the dismissal theory to befuddle a cornered PM and test the Congress's internal cohesion. The consensus amongst his official aides was that the prime minister could not be dismissed unless he lost his majority. R.K. Dhawan's recent television interview that he saw a dismissal order is delusional. No such order existed.

An alternative strategy was to bid for a second term by contesting against the Congress's official candidate, reversing Indira's gambit of 1969. R. Venkataraman, who was then the vice-president, cleverly called on the president proclaiming that he would resign if overlooked, the Congress's favourite then being B. Shankaranand. Once it sensed an emerging alliance, the

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Congress dropped its favourite and immediately backed Venkataraman. By the time Zail Singh's term ended, Rajiv Gandhi was not only suddenly aware of his constitutional responsibilities but even solicitous towards the president. Constitutional balance was restored and India got a less captive new president.

Could other presidents have employed available powers differently? Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed could certainly have delayed, if not blocked, the imposition of the Emergency in 1975. V.P. Singh may not have rebelled if Rajiv Gandhi had Zail Singh's counsel rather than his antagonism. Why was S.D. Sharma mute and Rao somnolent as the Babri Masjid was felled in 1992? K.R. Narayanan, his presidency ending, may not have written to prime minister Rajiv Gandhi on the 198 anti-Singh riots as he did on the 200 Gujarat riots to PM A.B. Vajpayee. Finall if Pratibha Patil had got the 2G spectru issue referred to the cabinet, would not th subsequent fracas been avoided? Bageh said of the British sovereign that "we mus not let daylight upon magic". Besides th two early entrants in the presidential race P.A. Sangma has joined the race. Hi successful speakership, his candour o Sonia Gandhi's foreign origin and cheerf demeanour indicate presidential qualities However regrettably, "rubber stamps" ar favoured choices. The irony though is tha once in Rashtrapati Bhavan, no incumben can escape the daylight or his oath or hi predecessors' tribulations. Quite often, th post shapes the incumbent.

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Hardit Singh Malik, The Original 'Flying Sikh' Who Was A Fighter Pilot In World War I

*Surabhi Nijhawan**

Almost 1.3 million Indians fought in World War I, but there was one who flew an aircraft and sadly, we don't know anything about him. Sardar Hardit Singh Malik, was the first Indian, or rather Asian to join the Royal Flying Corps and participate in aerial combat on the western front during which he battled and shot down German fighters.



Malik was born on 23 November, 1892 in a Sikh family from Rawalpindi, Punjab which was a part of pre-partitioned India. Hardit Singh went to England at age 14, did his schooling from English Public School, Eastborne College, from where he went to Balliol College at Oxford. After graduating with honours, his co-curricular achievements were applauded as he was good in both cricket and golf.

During World War I in 1914, he was in his second year at Oxford and most of his British colleagues volunteered to join the fighting services. Sardar Hardit Singh Malik too wanted to join. He was initially denied permission to join the force and was instead asked to serve as an orderly in an Indian military hospital. But he overcame institutional racism to become a fighter pilot for the British before he took on the Germans.

When he was initially denied permission, a dejected Malik then went to France to help out as an ambulance driver and asked the authorities if he could volunteer in the air force. Thankfully, the French agreed. Malik wrote a letter to his tutor at Oxford giving him the good news. The tutor then took it up with the chief of the RFC and said it would be an embarrassment if a British subject was employed by the French. After a long struggle, Malik was finally sent for training and was commissioned in the RFC, becoming the first Indian fighter pilot. RFC would go on to become the Royal Air Force during the war and it was Hardit Singh's commissioning that led RFC to open its doors for Indians.

*Received from: Baldev Singh Dhaliwal JP, E-mail: sewaoz@khalsa.com

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As cool as this story is, it gets better. During the course of the war, Malik shot down six German fighters. In those early days of aerial combat fighter pilots tried to shoot each other down with pistols and rifles if they came too close to each other. In fact, fighter pilot's life expectancy in those days was barely 10 days in combat. But Sardar Malik survived the entire war despite getting wounded in action. He suffered injuries to his leg while dogfighting with the German pilots.

In those days he was the first to be posted to the new squadron and was fondly known as a Sikh from Rawalpindi. Malik never parted ways with his turban, and somehow managed to fit over it, an outsized flying helmet, earning the nickname of 'Flying Hobgoblin' from the ground crews. Unfortunately he was credited with only two kills.

But that's not all there is to his story.

Later, Malik served as Joint Secretary to the Government of India from 1934 to 1937 and as India's Trade Commissioner to the United States and Canada, based in New York, from 1938 to 1943. Additionally, he was also the Premier of the state of Patiala from 1943 to 1947.

In 1949, he became the Indian ambassador to France after which he retired in 1956.

After retirement, he returned to his first love, golf, even with two German bullets still embedded in his leg. Sardar Hardit Singh lived till he was 91, passing away on 3rd October 1985. □

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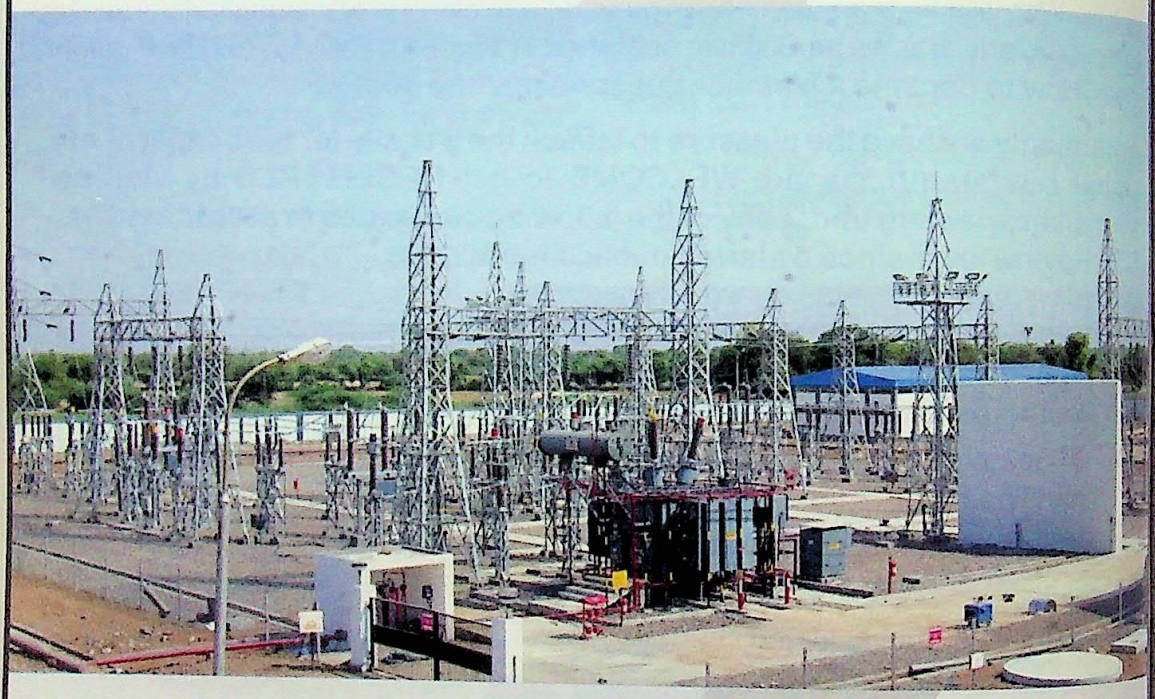
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A Word of Appreciation!

Respected Sardar Saran Singh Ji,

Sat Sri Akal.

Whenever I get a new issue of The Sikh Review, my respect for you increases manifold.

Under your amazing stewardship, The Sikh Review has smoothly sailed through several troubled times during the last few decades. Also, this unique Sikh journal has improved considerably since you took over as its Editor many years ago.

As the Sikh diaspora has spread all over the world, The Sikh Review has become a great source of inspiration for the global Sikh community. This incredible periodical has also become a major connection for the Sikhs living in various countries.

I sincerely hope that you would continue to pursue the noble mission of serving Sikhism globally for many more years.

With regards and best wishes.

Sincerely,

Sr. Santokh Singh Bains
Chicago, USA
Email: santokhbains713@gmail.com

★★★★★★

"In Search of Perfection!"

Dear Sir,

Dr. I.J.Singh is blessed by Satguru to always come out with brilliant and unique ideas to strengthen the values of Sikhism. A highly decorated academician living in New York has always reminded us through his articles and books to wake up facing the challenges in the modern world. I have met him and find in him a humble, intelligent Sikh who is worried about the deficiencies in working of Sikh Organizations which are not following the message of Guru in right earnest.

Everybody admires the role of The Sikh Review Kolkata which is the only English Magazine serving as real communicator of the Sikhs all over the world. I.J .Singh is honorary 'Overseas' Editor of this Magazine.

In the July 2017 issue of The Sikh Review he has written an Article ' In search of Perfection ' wherein he has narrated how the Sikhs try to pull down the Sikh achievers who do so much for the community. He mentioned many such Sikh stalwarts in our history like Bhai Kahn Singh, Bhai Randhir Singh, Bhai Vir Singh , Prof. Pyaara Singh Prof. Darshan Singh former Jathedar Akal Takht, Yogi Bhajan and many others, who did so much for the Community but the Sikhs tried to pin point many negatives in their personalities. This is old habit among us to be at the lookout to find fault against our icons. History is full of such incidents. Bhai Mani Singh, Baba Banda Singh Bahadur Bhai Gurmukh Singh , Baba Gurdit Singh Kamagata Maru, Baba Kharak Singh Master Tara Singh and many other such icons were targeted by us. Dr.Gopal Singh was the first person who translated Guru

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Granth into English but suffered at the hands of Sikh leaders. We believe that everyone should be 100 percent.

We have to praise the work done by our icons and not to go after their personalities. Maharaja Ranjit Singh is example for us. We all praise his achievements and have never discussed his personal follies. I can name so many Sikhs who have done great service to the Community but we never try to honor them. Our religious authorities only declare punishment but have never look towards those persons who have brought **honor and glory to Sikhi** in various fields. I agree with I.J.Singh ideas but I feel that Sikh leadership who has the authority to take positive steps will not even read such articles!

Sr. Tarlochan Singh,
Ex - MP (Rajya Sabha)
Email:tarlochan@tarlochansingh.com

★★★★★★

Dear Sir,

Let me refer to the Editorial "In search of Perfection," by Prof. I.J. Singh, humans are - indeed mortals, and have often personal secrets to cover-up. Even the 'icons' are often politicians, like the Mahatma and Mrs. Indira Gandhi. We may even ignore Stalin, Nixon and many others. Sport persons excel due to their skill. It will be expecting too much to look for virtues in most of them. They may be shrewd -- even manipulative, and could do anything to attain and hang on to power!

However, we expect much better performance from social and religious leaders. Even the role of few Popes has, during middle ages have been called to question. Cathlic clergy has occasionally been taken to task. Any attempt that tend to check our natural instincts will not last for long. Utopian ideals do not pass the test of time.

Prof. Darshan Singh is a classic **Kirtania** and sings and quotes front Gurbani profusely. He mobilised and raised the spirits of the community when it was humbled and depressed in the aftermath of attack on Darbar Sahib. His spirited Kirtan and his eloquent explanations challenged the establishment. His contribution has been immense and worthy of commendations. He was appointed Jathedar of Akhal Thakat twice and one can have his opinion if he could have brought a rapprochement with the government. He exposed Jathedar Joginder Singh, father of Jarnail Singh Bindrawale, and others for their love of money and power. He was not wrong when he raised the question of spurious Dassam Granth. He was summoned at Akhal Thakat and excommunicated.

Prof. I.J. Singh is very right that we should listen to those with whom we disagree. Our Jathedars are not that noble, judicious and magnanimous. They fail to learn from past. The case of Prof. Gurmukh Singh is at point.

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The late Bhai Vir Singh was a visionary and a classical writer. His contributions are immense. He could think of starting a Bank for the community far back in 1908. In earlier days, it was the unwavering faith of community which made us to believe that Dasam Granth was the creation of Guru Sahib. The way the seal of approval was put by Bhai Mani Singh raises doubts and concerns. Bhai Vir Singh, in that current and influence, put his seal to the location of Hemkunt Sahib and on the paintings of Guru Sahibs by Sir Sobha Singh.

We have 'feet of clay' and in course of life, we may commit many mistakes and blunders, but 'fortunately' we also have our **Gurbani** which will guide and sail us through! Many mistakes are error of judgement and should be overlooked though the consequences can be irreversible in certain cases. What pains is when mistakes are made purposefully and with the intention to enrich oneself or to serve a purpose. Nature has ingrained many vices in us and our endeavour can be to protect ourselves from their influence. Being human is the greatest virtue when we are humane and enlightened.

Prof. Singh's articles are thought provoking and he questions, if not challenges, some of the practices which get struck during the course of journey. It keeps the system, and even faith, alive and vibrant when some of our Taksals, Deras, etc. have started inducting their own parochial versions to serve their interest. His questioning will make us think and dwell on the issues and that keeps the system conscious and moving.

Yours Truly,

Sr. Kuldip Singh

Email: Kukutej@hotmail.com

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In view of the global readership "The Sikh Review" is going to publish Matrimonial Column in their up-coming editions to extend co-operation to Gursikh families - living across the world – In search for a suitable Gursikh Match for their grown up children.

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CANADA Appoints Palbinder Kaur Shergill to Supreme Court



The Sikh world is thrilled to the historic achievement of a Sikh woman youth leader being appointed as a judge of the Supreme Court of British Columbia in New Westminster. The Honorable Madam Justice Palbinder Kaur Shergill Q.C. is the first Sikh woman wearing Sikh symbol of uncut hair and a turban to be appointed to the judiciary in Canada. In the past, she was named Queen's Counsel in 2012 and is also a recipient of the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal for Community Service.

Justice Shergill has been a leading human rights advocate and has represented the World Sikh Organization since 1991 on a pro bono basis. She served the interests of the Canadian Sikh community in several landmark cases heard by the Supreme Court of Canada. They included, Syndicat Northcrest v. Amselem, dealing with freedom of religion, Multani v. Commission Scolaire, dealing with right of Sikh students to wear the Sikh symbol of kirpan in schools and Loyola High School v. Quebec (Attorney General) with respect to the right of a Catholic high school to teach the provincial Ethics and Religious Culture course from a Catholic perspective. She served as a Governor for the Trial Lawyers Association of BC and as a Director on the Fraser Health Authority Board from 2002 to 2008. She is also a past Chair of the National Administrative Law Section of the Canadian Bar Association.

Justice Shergill is a prominent member of the Sikh community in Canada and is regularly invited to speak on human rights and Sikh issues both nationally and internationally. She worked in full-time private practice as lawyer and mediator with her law firm Shergill & Company, Trial Lawyers, specializing in commercial and civil litigation.

The World Sikh Organization of Canada (WSO) President Mukhbir Singh said, "The appointment of Justice Shergill is another milestone for the Sikh community in Canada. It is a matter of great pride that we today have the first turbaned Sikh-appointed to the judiciary in Canada and that too someone who has worked so closely with our organization. Justice Shergill's dedicated service to the legal profession and the community are well known, and she has truly made a difference through her work. We were very fortunate to have had Justice Shergill as a key member of our legal team, and we now look forward to her serving Canadians as a member of the BC bench." WSO is a non-profit organization with a mandate to promote and protect the interests of Canadian Sikhs, as well as to promote and advocate for the protection of human rights for all individuals, irrespective

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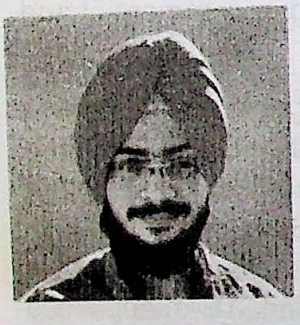
of race, religion, gender, ethnicity, and social and economic status.

The Sikh communities all over the world congratulate Justice Palbinder Kaur on her achievements and for bringing honour to the global Sikh Nation.

Bhai Harbans Lal, Ph.D.; D.Litt (Hons)
Email: harbansl@gmail.com

★★★★★★

Naveep Singh topped 'NEET 2017'



Navdeep Singh of Muktsar, Punjab, has topped NEET 2017 with AIR 1, securing 697 marks out of 720. He obtained 99.99 total percen-tile in National Eligibility cum Entrance Test. He is fond of playing cricket. He passed class 12th with 88% marks from Shivalik Public School and perfect 10 CGPA in class 10. His father Gopal Singh is a teacher at Government Senior Secondary School in Charewan village of Muktsar district. Navdeep's mother Simarjeet Kaur, is an employee in LIC.

Navdeep took coaching for NEET entrance examination from Helix Institute, Chandigarh. Mr. Singh said, "I was sure of clearing the exam but never expected to become All India topper." Navdeep has decided to secure admission in Maulana Azad Medical College, New Delhi for MBBS course.

Shy by nature, Navdeep has been regular in his studies. He shared how overwhelmed he is securing AIR 1, "I was expecting good marks but the result is overwhelming. I am glad that I could make my state and especially my city proud by bringing it on front nationally, as it is a very small and not much known place."

Sharing his views about the impact of social media, Navdeep said, "I did not used Facebook or WhatsApp for two years. My mother sacrificed more than me. She never attended any parties or functions and accompanied me all the time. This score was just because of my parents and teachers."

At last, Navdeep Singh says that aspirants must have faith in them. They should not think about result and must appear for examination with full confidence. According to Singh, candidates must choose their career with no peer pressure and must discuss their ideas with parents.

[Courtesy: www.entrancecorner.com]

★★★★★★

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Cambridgeshire Sikh Detective Sergeant Awarded Queen's Police Medal



Detective Sergeant Amerjit Singh has been awarded the prestigious Queen's Police Medal by Her Majesty The Queen for his dedication to protecting the most vulnerable.

DS Singh, 38, joined Cambridgeshire Constabulary in 2004 – the first Sikh police officer to be employed by the force, and has worked widely in Peterborough since.

He started out as a reactive PC and sergeant before moving to CID and working in numerous departments including the Serious Crime Team, Central Intelligence Bureau and Rape Investigation Team, as a detective constable and then detective sergeant. He is now studying to become an Inspector and works within the Public Protection Department.

DS Singh originally started out as a legal executive but wanted a career that would allow him to give something back to the community and one that his family and children would be proud of.

He has been described by his colleagues as a dedicated professional and inspiring officer who has brought offenders of the most serious crimes to justice. He has dedicated time to building trust and confidence between the police and Sikh communities

He said: "I was immensely humbled and proud to receive this honour. I can only be the officer I am today because of the fantastic colleagues who I have worked with over the years. This recognition is for all of us who share the same ethics, values and vision to keep Cambridgeshire safe."

Chief Constable Alec Wood said: "Amerjit embodies all that is good at Cambridgeshire Constabulary. He is dedicated to protecting the vulnerable through professional, thorough investigation. Furthermore, his contribution to developing community, police relations and supporting great diversity within the police service is invaluable. He is one of our unsung heroes and worthy of this prestigious honour."

Minister for Policing and the Fire Service, Nick Hurd added: "The work our police do cutting crime and keeping us safe is incredibly important. I am delighted to see a dedicated public servant like DS Singh awarded for their dedication and commitment. I am particularly pleased that more than half of the Queen's Police Medals continue to be awarded to rank and file police officers for their work cuttingcrime and keeping our communities safe."

[Source: www.peterboroughtoday.co.uk]

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THE DIVINE WAY OF LIVING
By Dr. Jasjit Singh Walia
Published by Hemkunt Publishing, New Delhi
Pages 288, Price Rs. 275

A Review By Katherine Faust (USA)*

Much is written on the different aspects of the Sikh faith and practices by adherents anddevotees, yet Dr.Walia' s Dale Carnegie style of writing in "The Divine Way of Living" spractical, meaningful, and therefore very effective. Dr.Walia engages the reader to deepenself-reflection in a remarkable way.The author draws motivation from his desire to see truthfulliving in the world. Dr. Walia uses a universal title that is ecumenical in nature to appeal to anyinterested reader, regardless of one's various identities. Inspired by the founder of the Sikhfaith, Guru Nanak Sahib, the author introduces spiritual wisdom from the Sikh spiritual canon,Guru Sahib Sahib, and shares beliefs, values, and daily practices that are described as inherentlydivine and thus guide one to truthful living. The spiritual wisdom contained in the Sikhscripture is shared with the readers through thought provoking questions like, "What's the goaland purpose of human life? Why are we here, and how to live in peace and happiness? Why dohuman beings suffer and die? What is the Divine Law? How do we solve world problems likeviolence, hatred, and injustice? How do we awaken our inner self, our conscience? How do werestore civility, morality, and integrity in our society? How do we eradicate I-ness, self-centeredness,and arrogance in human society? What happens after death? How do we realizeIk Oankar?

*E-mail: kfaust@tulane.edu

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Dr. Jasjit Singh Walia is a Professor Emeritus at Loyola University at New Orleans, LA, USA. He isknown for his scholarly work, scientific contributions, and love for Sikhi. He is humble Gursikhwho is actively engages in interfaith philosophical pursuits.

To give the flavor of Dr.Walia's style and scientific mind, I share a powerful and succinct quotefrom his writing. He states, " Science and religion, different they are, share a common objective– to "know" – "to discover the truth" that lies in nature, in the universe and at the hearts of ourexistence. It is this fundamental concern for discovering the truth that binds religion andscience together. Science answers specific questions about the workings of nature, whereasreligion delves deeper into the mystery of life and its creator (God). These are two essentiallyindependent ways of understanding reality, and must not be thought of as being in opposition.The reality is, that the universe and God are too vast for human mind to comprehendcompletely.

In the light of Gurmat (Guru inspired life), the writer has beautifully expressed the Sikh thoughtand philosophy. I have enjoyed reading this book and would not hesitate to state that this bookis a must read for our aspiring youths to gain insight on how to live meaningful and productivelife. As the writer states, "This book is specially geared to the young and budding youths, whomay first want to learn how to lead and then propagate a righteous way of living in our diverseand mixed

ANMOL SAKHIAN (Punjabi)
By Jasbir Kaur, M.A. (Resi. in USA)
Publisher: National Book Shop, Chandni Chowk, Delhi
Pages 132, [Price Rs. 225/- (Hard Cover)]

Bibi Jasbir Kaur is an enchanting story teller. This slim volumes in Gurmukhi has been produced and printed with devotion - in popular Punjabi. No wonder it seeks to provide a devotee's account of the lives and teachings of the blessed TEN GURUS who brought - universal message of love and devotion.

Specially designed for young children the life stories of the glorious Gurus are presented for the benefit of growing youth with or without parental guidance.

Notwithstanding the three figure price parents should encourage their wards to get familiar with lives and times of our Glorious Gurus.

Ed - SR

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CONTENTS

MEDITATION	Ode to the Ineffable Guru Gobind Singh Ji	*Shabad Gurbani*	5
EDITORIAL	Dear God: You are great and all-powerful; my understanding is so very inadequate.	Amrit Kaur Sabharwal	6
THEOLOGY	The Divine Name and its attributes?	Dr. Kirpal Singh, New Zealand	8
	Guru Gobind Singh: An Eloquent Personality	Dr. Harpreet Kaur	11
GREETINGS	Message of 'Gurpurab Greetings' from Vatican		15
PHILOSOPHY	An Interfaith Meet at Gaya: Concepts Discussed	Prof. Dalvinder Singh Grewal	17
MORAL TRADITION	The Concept of Guru and Disciple in the - Philosophy of Guru Gobind Singh Ji	Dr. Amrit Raina	23
	Daan - Altruism	Dr. (Bhai) Harbans Lal	28
THE MYSTERIOUS UNIVERSE	Theories of 'Creation' of the Universe: Science Vs. Gurbani	Dr. Manjit Singh	30
HISTORY	Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji's 'ZAFAR NAMA'	Jasbir Kaur Ahuja	37
HERITAGE	Badshah-Darvesh Guru Gobind Singh!	R M Chopra	42
	Creation of Khalsa on Vaisakhi by the Almighty - Hero-Guru Gobind Singh Ji	Dr Harleen Kaur	47
PERSPECTIVES	Sri Guru Gobind Singh-Saviour of Human Rights	Dr. (Maj) B S Bhasin	53
	So Help Me Waheguru, Allah, God, Yahweh El Al...	I.J. Singh (New York)	57
DIASPORA	"O Canada! Our Canada!"	Guru Fatha Singh Khalsa	61
YOUTH SECTION	Spiritual Emptiness and Problem of Addiction - in Sikh Youths of Punjab (India)	Dr. S S Sodhi, Canada	67
POET'S CORNER	Guru Gobind Singh Ji	Prof. Puran Singh	71
READERS' FORUM	Letters to Editor		73
DIARY	Synopsis of Notable Events		77
BOOKS	*"Anmol Sakhia"* by Sdn. Jasbir Kaur	*Reviewed by* Dr. Harpreet Kaur	81

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Ode to the Ineffable Guru Gobind Singh Ji

ਗਜ਼ਲ ਭਾਈ ਨੰਦ ਲਾਲ ਜੀ (ਫ਼ਾਰਸੀ)

ਦੀਨ ਓ ਦੁਨੀਆ ਦਰ ਕਮੰਦੇ ਆਂ ਪਰੀ-ਰਖੁਸਾਰ-ਏ ਮਾ ॥
ਹਰ ਦੋ ਆਲਮ ਕੀਮਤ-ਏ ਯੱਕ-ਤਾਰ ਮੂਏ ਯਾਰੇ-ਏ ਮਾ ॥

ਮਾ ਨਮੇ ਆਰੇਮ ਤਾਬੇ ਗ਼ਮਜ਼ਾ-ਏ ਮਸਤਾਨਾਉ ॥
ਯੱਕ ਨਿਗਾਹੇ ਜਾਂਫ਼ਿਜ਼ਾਇਸ਼ ਬਸ ਬਵਦ ਦਰਕਾਰੇਮਾ ॥

ਗਾਹੇ ਸੂਫੀ ਗਾਹੇ ਜ਼ਾਹਿਦ ਗਹਿ ਕਲੰਦਰ ਮੇ ਸ਼ਵੱਦ ॥
ਰੰਗਹਾਏ ਮੁਖ਼ਤਲਿਫ਼ ਦਾਰਦ ਬੁਤ ਏ ਅੱਯਾਰ-ਏ ਮਾ ॥

ਕਦਰੇ ਲਾਲੇ ਓ ਬਜੁੱਜ਼ ਆਸ਼ਿਕ ਨ ਦਾਨਦ ਹੇਚ ਕੱਸ ॥
ਕੀਮਤ-ਏ-ਯਾਕੂਤ ਦਾਨਦ ਚਸ਼ਮੋ ਗੌਹਰ ਬਾਰਿਮਾ ॥

ਹਰ ਨਫਸ 'ਗੋਯਾ' ਬ-ਯਾਦਏ ਨਰਗਿਸਏ ਮਖ਼ਮੂਰੇ ਓ ॥
ਬਾਦਾ ਹਾਇ ਸ਼ੌਕ ਮੇਨੌਸ਼ਦ ਦਿਲੇ-ਹੋਸ਼ਿਆਰੇ ਮਾ ॥

Translation*

My Beloved Guru (Govind SinghJi) is the Lord and Master of both our spiritual and temporal affairs.

His single strand of hair is more precious than the all the wealth of the two worlds.

I have not the capacity to bear the sight of his brilliant visage

Enough is for me, his single glance that confers lifegiving vitality.

Now, he appears as a Sufi. The next instant, a scholar, and again a charmer.

Deceptive and diverse are his colours - that is my Master.

Only a true devotee can bear his spellbinding charm.

His rare gem-like *persona* calls for a connoisseur's vision.

'Goya' - I am deeply engrossed in my Beloved Lord's rememberance:

My heart and soul drink his ambrosial sight.

*Tr. by S. S. *(with input from Prof. Ujagar Singh Bawa, (USA)*

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"ਤੂ ਸਮਰਥੁ ਵਡਾ ਮੇਰੀ ਮਤਿ ਥੋਰੀ ਰਾਮ ॥"

Dear God: You are great and all-powerful; my understanding is so very inadequate.

*AMRIT KAUR SABHARWAL**

ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕਾ ਖਾਲਸਾ, ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕੀ ਫਤਿਹ..

It gives me immense pleasure to Greet all our revered Members and Readers and wish you all a blessed 2018. As we stride into the New Year with resolute faith, I pray that each one of us be blessed with HIS Grace. May we soar ahead with a caring heart and firm wisdom for creating a Divinely inspired and emancipated society.

By God's design, The Sikh Panth commences the year, celebrating the Prakash Utsav of Sri Guru Gobind Singhji, our Spiritual Father, a Poet, Philosopher and our Protector. However, our rejoicing is tinged with deep sadness when we think of the Supreme sacrifice of His Father, Guru Tegh Bahadurji for the cause of Righteousness – As saviour of the ancient Hindu Religion. Dasam Satguru's four Sahibzadas, uncompromisingly, laid down their lives to up-hold divinely bestowed faith. The brutal murder of two of Satguru's Sons by "SUBA" of Sirhind left a permanent blot of the Mughal Rule. The death of Mata Gujriji remains beyond any parallel in the history of the world. Our 'Guru Pita' showered HIS boundless love for the **KHALSA**.

Reminiscing Guru Sahib's teachings our head bows in Deep Reverence before God for giving "The Panth" a renewed Pioneering Spirit, a Sense of Divine Justice, Staunch Devotion, Commitment to Universal Welfare and an Oceanic courage!

Sri SatGuru Sahib upheld and continued preaching the quintessential message of Guru Nanak Devji; of Universal Brotherhood, Equality and Truthful living.

By a Divine Commandment, Guru Gobind Singhji created the Khalsa Panth, and infused it with the Spirit of Chivalry as well as Spirituality. Indeed the brave and fearless Khalsa - filled with the spirit of Selfless Service for the Good of humanity and the Glory of Akal Purakh – became the forerunner of the Khalsa Raj in the 19th Century and the freedom of India in the 20th

* *Associate Editor - The Sikh Review [Email: aksabharwal47@gmail.com]*

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Century – even at the cost of 'half the Punjab Province' – the Sikh Homeland!

Amazingly, The Tenth Guru considered Himself – simply – and humbly – as the 'servant' of the Supreme Being! Such humility raises the Guru far above the other Saints of the world: "ਮੈਂ ਹਉਂ ਪਰਮ ਪੁਰਖ ਕਉ ਦਾਸਾ ॥ ਦੇਖਨ ਅਇਓ ਜਗਤ ਤਮਾਸ਼ਾ ॥" (I am a servant of the Supreme Being) - he wrote.

* *

A Saint-Scholar Departs:

On the 27th of November 2017, we lost the "Panth Rattan" Dr. Bibi Mahinder Kaur Ji Gill. The vacuum caused by her departure is simply impossible to fill. She held the post of Principal of Mata Sundari College for three decades and had the distinction of being the author of over 170 books on Sikh History and Gurbani. There was sheer magic in her pen. Besides stating facts in her writings, they were infused with love, Devotion and emotion. Her research and writings are an extensive contribution to the Sikh Lore - unmatched in recent times.

For us, Dr (Mrs) Gill was a friend, sister, mentor and guide. She will be missed and remembered by the Sikh Panth for the tremendous contribution in the domain of Sikh Literature. Rich tributes were paid to her at the Bhog ceremony by Dr. Jaspal Singhji, and many other eminent personalities. Dr. Gill will continue to live forever through the treasure of books she has left for the coming generations. Many readers may not know that she was the Mother of renowned Sufi Singer Rabbi Shergill. ❑

FOR BASIC KNOWLEDGE, BOLD COMMENT READ

The Sikh Review

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The Divine Name and its attributes?

*Dr. Kirpal Singh, Wellington, New Zealand**

Guru Amar Das Ji gives the following directions about obtaining Naam:-

ਸਦਾ ਸਿਫਤਿ ਸਲਾਹ ਤੇਰੀ ਨਾਮੁ ਮਨਿ ਵਸਾਵਏ ॥

[Raag Raamkali, M. 3, SGGS: 917-7]

Constantly singing Your Praises and Glories, Your Name is enshrined in the mind.

ਨਾਮੁ ਜਿਨ ਕੈ ਮਨਿ ਵਸਿਆ ਵਾਜੇ ਸਬਦ ਘਨੇਰੇ ॥

The divine melody of the Shabad vibrates for those, within whose minds the Naam abides.

The only prescribed way to live a purposeful life (opposite of Dhrig-life) is enumerated by Guru Nanak Sahib:-

ਵਿਣੁ ਗੁਣ ਕੀਤੇ ਭਗਤਿ ਨ ਹੋਇ ॥

[Japji Sahib, Guru Nanak, SGGS: 4-16]

Without virtue, there is no devotional worship.

What is that essential Gun (ਗੁਣ)/ And without which the 'Gobind Millan' is not possible? - ਆਪੁ ਗਵਾਈਐ

ਆਪੁ ਗਵਾਈਐ ਤਾ ਸਹੁ ਪਾਈਐ ਅਉਰੁ ਕੈਸੀ ਚਤੁਰਾਈ ॥

[Raag Tilang, M. 1, SGGS: 722-13]

Give up your self-hood, in order to obtain your Husband Lord; as no other clever tricks are of any use ?

ਹੁ ਨਦਰਿ ਕਰਿ ਦੇਖੈ ਸੋ ਦਿਨੁ ਲੇਖੈ ਕਾਮਣਿ ਨਉ ਨਿਧਿ ਪਾਈ ॥

When the Husband Lord looks upon the soul-bride with His Gracious Glance, that day is historic - the bride obtains the nine treasures.

The need is to become a 'ਕਾਮਣਿ' by surrendering to Waheguru - seeing HIM in the driving seat and losing sight of one'self completely.

ਨਾਨਕ ਭਗਤੀ ਰਤਿਆ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮਿ ਸਮਾਇ ॥੧੮॥

[Salok Vaaraan and Vadheek Guru Amar Das, SGGS: 1414-14]

O Nanak, the devotees are imbued with the Lord; they are absorbed in the Name of the Lord. ||18||

ਸਿਖਹੁ ਸਬਦੁ ਪਿਆਰਿਹੋ ਜਨਮ ਮਰਨ ਕੀ ਟੇਕ ॥

[Gauri Ki Vaar M. 5, SGGS: 320-5]

O Sikhs, love the Word of the Shabad; in life and death, it is our only support.

ਮੁਖ ਊਜਲ ਸਦਾ ਸੁਖੀ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਿਮਰਤ ਏਕ ॥੨॥

Your face shall be radiant, and you shall find a lasting peace, O Nanak, remembering the... ਤੂ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਦਾਤਾ ਦਾਨਿ ਮਤਿ ਪੂਰਾ ਹਮ ਥਾਰੇ ਭੇਖਾਰੀ ਜੀਉ ॥ [Raag Sorath M. 1, SGGS: 597-16]

You, God, are the Giver of gifts, the Lord of perfect understanding; I am a mere beggar at Your Door.

Professor Emeritus, # 1/19, Caldwell Street, Karori , Wellington 6012, New Zealand
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ਮੈ ਕਿਆ ਮਾਗਉ ਕਿਛੁ ਥਿਰੁ ਨ ਰਹਾਈ ਹਰਿ ਦੀਜੈ ਨਾਮੁ ਪਿਆਰੀ ਜੀਉ ॥੧॥

What should I beg for? Nothing remains permanent; O Lord, please, bless me with Your Beloved Name. ||1||

It appears that Naam is a thread that one needs to hold on to in order to know Waheguru (to become aware of divine virtues). All the Sikh Gurus, Baghats, Mahapurakhs and Gurmukhs have given evidence of knowing Waheguru by holding on to Naam (even those who were not exposed to Gurbani).

In Sukhmami Sahib it is also revealed that Naam is a gift from Waheguru and we all have within us since birth: "***Nau nidh Amrit prab ka naam dehi meh eis ka bisram***".

We are not able to recognize the presence of Naam because of a shield of ego (h0umai) in us and the suggested remedy to bring out Naam from hiding is - "Prabkasimran sab te Oocha" (staying in remembrance - *MithiYaad* of Waheguru): "***Prab ke simran man ki mal jahe, amrit naam ridh maeh samaye***".

Once the heart and mind are filled with Naam then the 'man' gradually settles down with Naam that leads to blissful divine *awastha* enjoyed by spiritual leaders.

In Gurmat, removal of ego is a pre-requisite to obtaining of Naam, which is achieved by contemplation on *Gur-Shabad* as Hukam of Waheguru. - "***Nanak hukame je booje ta homai kahe na kohe***". (Jap Ji Sahib). To be able to live in Hukam of Waheguru comes with His Bhagati (devotion) and the Baghati come with His grace (kirpa/nadr/gurparsad) - "***kar kirpa jis apni bhagat dehe, Nanak te jan naam milaye***" (Sukhmani Sahib Ashtpadi 11 pauri 3).

The meditation in Gurmat is to live with trust and faith in Gur-Shabad (Gurbani) as ordained by Waheguru as the 'Hukam of Waheguru'.

"To do Naam Japna - one got to have serious and intense desire and love for achieving higher spiritual states leading to union with God. " - Rabinder Singh Bhambra (USA).

"Please do not try to take the Sangat back to pre-Guru Nanak teachings." - Rawel Singh, USA

According to Guru Nanak DevJi, Waheguru Japna is a Gurmat state, which signifies an atonement with Waheguru and this awastha (state) is achieved with the Grace of Waheguru:-

ਤਿਨ ਮੁਖਿ ਟਿਕੇ ਨਿਕਲਹਿ ਜਿਨ ਮਨਿ ਸਚਾ ਨਾਉ ॥

[Sri Raag M. 1, SGGS: 16-8]

The faces of those whose minds are attuned to the True Name are anointed with the Mark of Grace.

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ਕਰਮਿ ਮਿਲੈ ਤਾ ਪਾਈਐ ਨਾਹੀ ਗਲੀ ਵਾਉ ਦੁਆਉ ॥੨॥

If one receives God's Grace, then such honors are received, and not by mere words. ||2||

Bhatt KiratJi's *anubhav* (Realisation) in this respect is given in the following pankti:-

ਭਗਤਿ ਭਾਇ ਭਰਪੂਰੁ ਰਿਦੈ ਉਚਰੈ ਕਰਤਾਰੈ ॥ [Savaiye (praise of Guru Amar Das) Bhatt Kirat , SGGS: 1395-10].

His heart is totally filled with loving devotion; he chants to the Creator Lord.

Guru Arjan Dev Ji attaches a lot of significance to the state of *Naam Japna* in Sukhmani Sahib and suggests that Sants and Sadhs are known to enjoy this state:-

ਜਿਸ ਕਉ ਹਰਿ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਮਨਿ ਚਿਤਿ ਆਵੈ ॥

[Raag Gauri M. 5, SGGS: 281-14]

One who focuses his conscious mind on the Lord God

ਸੋ ਸੰਤੁ ਸੁਹੇਲਾ ਨਹੀ ਡੁਲਾਵੈ ॥

- that Saint is at peace; he does not waver

ਪ੍ਰਭ ਜੀ ਬਸਹਿ ਸਾਧ ਕੀ ਰਸਨਾ ॥ [Raag Gauri M.5, SGGS: 263-4]

God abides upon the tongues of His Saints.

ਨਾਨਕ ਜਨ ਕਾ ਦਾਸਨਿ ਦਸਨਾ ॥੪॥

Nanak is the servant of the slave of His slaves. ||4||

Gurbani gives promise of fruits of Waheguru Naam Japna as well:-

ਜਿਸੁ ਨੀਚ ਕਉ ਕੋਈ ਨ ਜਾਨੈ ॥ [Raag Asa M.5, SGGS: 386-15]

That wretched being, whom no one knows

ਨਾਮੁ ਜਪਤ ਉਹੁ ਚਹੁ ਕੁੰਟ ਮਾਨੈ ॥੧॥

Dwelling on God's Name, One is honored in the Four directions. ||1||

Some members on GL-Z (Gurbani Learning Zone), think that Waheguru NaamJ apna is simpy a parroting exercise without any significance. They ignore the fact Waheguru *Naam Japna* is both a Gurmat tool as well as a measuring rod to assess the state of highest spiritual attainment. All our Gurus, pious men and Saints, Gurmukhs and Gursikhs have enjoyed/are enjoying this state as per the following promise:-

ਨਾਮ ਸੰਗਿ ਜਿਸ ਕਾ ਮਨੁ ਮਾਨਿਆ ॥

[Raag Gauri M. 5, SGGS: 281-14]

One whose mind accepts the Company of the Naam,

ਨਾਨਕ ਤਿਨਹਿ ਨਿਰੰਜਨੁ ਜਾਨਿਆ ॥੩॥

The Name of the Lord, O Nanak, knows the Immaculate Lord. ||3|

Waheguru Naam Japna is directly linked to Bhagati (love/devotion) for Waheguru and leads to Naam:-

ਕਰਿ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਜਿਸੁ ਅਪਨੀ ਭਗਤਿ ਦੇਇ ॥

[Raag Gauri M. 5, SGS. 277-8]

Those whom the Lord mercifully blesses with His devotional worship

ਨਾਨਕ ਤੇ ਜਨ ਨਾਮਿ ਮਿਲੇਇ ॥੩॥

- O Nanak, they are absorbed into the Naam. ||3||

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Guru Gobind Singh: An Eloquent Personality

*Dr. Harpreet Kaur**

The eloquent personality of Guru Gobind Singh, the Tenth incarnation of Guru Nanak has been awe-inspiring for all. Known as Dashmesh (Tenth Master) or Amrit Data (The Dispeser of Nectar), his charismatic and multi-faceted personality reflects qualities as a spiritual person, warrior, poet, musician, philosopher, luminary and visionary, The Tenth Guru stirred the Sikh to learn the use of weapons and other skills to prepare them for warfare. His life has been dedicated to struggle for values like freedom, equality, secularism and democratic principles. Throughout his life, he worked to uplift the downtrodden segments of the society, irrespective of the caste, religion, sect or race. He made the people conscious of their dignity, self-respect and national pride.

Guru Gobind Singh was born at Patna at turbulent time when the socio-political setup of the country has degenerated to a miserable low and any means for saving the honour of the nation were fruitless. The people did not find any ray of hope to free themselves from the unending suppression and torture. Guru Gobind Singh's mission was to end oppression and subjugation, reinvigorate and empower the suppresed and exploited people. The Guru's fearless initiative in arousing the dormant energies of the vanquished people to stand against tyranny, oppression and subjugation resulted in a new turn of history. The Tenth Master realised the importance of resorting to sword and embraced the path of struggle.

The Tenth Master combined the cult of sword with the spiritual values. The martyrdom of Guru ArjanDev earlier combined the doctrines of Miri and Piri, the swords of Shakti and Bhakti, in the hands of the followers of the Guru to fight for the cause of righteousness. After martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur, Guru Gobind Singh furthered the flame of his voluntary sacrifice by rejuvenating his people and infusing a martial spirit in the Sikhs along with spiritualism. He believed that in the turbulent times the example of sacrifice by Sachcha Patshah, Guru Tegh Bahadur would not fulfil the purpose of safeguarding righteousness and innocent countrymen against oppression. It had become imperative for the masses to draw the sword against the tyrannical rule. He endorsed Shakti as a war weapon, i.e. sword or Khanda to reinstate peace and justice in the Indian society. The Tenth Guru infused an unmatched disposition into the people and transformed them into valiant warriors with the purpose of establishing righteousness through the double-edged sword of Shakti and Bhakti combined.

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[The above article is a chapter from the book titled, Guru Gobind Singh: Saint Soldier' edited by Dr. Harbans Kaur Sagoo]

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The Tenth Master wanted to raise subjugated people against the tormentors and enthused his Sikhs to defend themselves. When persistent battles were imposed upon him, he geared up to defend and thee saint assumed the role of a soldier. Almost 14 wars were fought by him from 1690 to 1699. The Guru endorsed the principles of freedom, secularism, inalienable rights of man and democratic principles. The creation of Khalsa enabled the masses to hold their heads in high esteem for the sovereignty was transferred to the exploited. The founding of the institution of Khalsa ushered a dawn of the novel and regenerated society. Guru Gobind Singh was so far sighted that this institution embraces the socio-economic contours of the new age to come.

In fact, the movement undertaken by the Tenth Master is more pervasive, deep-rooted and radical than any of the revolutions that have occurred in the present times and shook the very foundations on which the society was based. The Bolsheviks and the French Revolutions of the West shaped the society and changed the very foundations of the governments. However, the vigor behind the French Revolution slackened in the 19th century and the Bolsheviks Revolution perished within 70 years of its birth. Guru Gobind Singh, architect of Subaltern Revolution had a long-lasting implication not only, on the society of those times but also, influencing today, i.e. 351 years after, in India and even across the borders of India. The singles of Tenth Sikh Master in the annals of world history in a most remarkable manner. To commemorate the 351st Birth Anniversary of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji, a humble tribute can be reiteration of the teachings laid down by Him and the purpose and potential of the Khalsa in the modern context.

A Lifelong Crusade for upliftment of the Subalterns

Guru Gobind Singh was a matchless warrior and led a lifelong crusade for the subaltern revival by restructuring the society on the moral and spiritual basis. The battles he fought, including the first battle against Hill Chiefs led by Raja Bhim Chand at Bhangani exhibits that these confrontations were thrust upon him. After the creation of Khalsa, the Mughals and the Hill Chiefs waged a number of battles Guru Gobind at Anandpur. The Hill Rulers were frightened of Guru's ever-increasing influence and begged for assistance from the Mughals. The situation in the fort worsened. The five beloved ones along with Mata Gujri were in favour of vacating the fort and Guru Gobind bowed to the command of the Khalsa.

Guru Sahib led the Khalsa forces in the battle of Chamkaur and fought with the massive army of enemies of the Khalsa Panth. The battle of Chamkaur was an unequal war between a handful of the Guru's men and a large number of enemies. In Zafarnama addressed to the Emperor Aurangzeb, Guru Gobind Singh, wrote "What could forty famished men do when such a large number fell on them abruptly.

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In the battle, the two elder sons of the Guru, Ajit Singh and Jujhar Singh pleaded with the father, one after another, to be allowed to go the battleground. They embraced death graciously by fighting bravely against the heavy odds of the enemy army. He saw his two sons and his chosen companions fall one after another in front of his eyes, before he had to reluctantly leave the battle scene. In Zafarnama, the Guru wrote that it mattered least if his four sons had been killed, the Khalsa was still alive.

The great Guru maintained a perfect poise of mind even in the supreme sacrifice of almost entire family including his father, mother, sons and devoted followers. He stood firmly for the cause of freedom of conscience and righteousness.

After a Pathan stabbed the Guru in abdomen, a British Surgeon sutured the wound but a few months later, it opened again. The Guru refused to have the wound sutured again, but, before the 'Jot' (the Flame) merged with "Akhand Jot" (The Eternal Flame), he sent for the Granth Sahib. He placed five-paisa and a coconut and bowed before the Holy Granth Sahib that henceforth, would lead and guide the Khalsa. He submitted and merged his personality with the Khalsa.

The Reasons of Creation of the Khalsa Common-wealth

Guru Gobind Rai endeavoured to further the flame of voluntary supreme sacrifice of his father. After martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur, Guru Gobind Singh took up the onerous task of revitalizing the spirits in his people by infusing a martial disposition in the Sikh along with spiritualism. In the creation of the Khalsa, the mission of Guru Gobind Singh is intently linked to the fanatic dogma pursued by the Mughal Emperor, Aurangzeb who believed that the highest duty was to wage Jehad or holy war against the infields land (dar-ul-harb) and compel them to surrender and accept Islam. Aurangzeb's fanatic policies against the non-believers resulted in the execution of Guru Tegh Bahadur on November 11, 1675 when he denied embracing Islam. Indubhushan Banerjee says, "Thee Guru's execution undoubtedly, strengthened the resistance against the religious policy of Aurangzeb and at the same time, prepared the way for the final stage in the evolution of Sikhism". (Banerjee Indubhushan, 1947).

Guru Gobind Singh grasped that the hard fact of the prevalent society that the native people were suffering from oppression and forceful conversion. The Guru worked incessantly to transform the subjugated masses and to instill unity, bravery, self-respect, freedom and fearlessness in them. Guru Gobind Singh created the Khalsa 'from the ashes of Guru Tegh Bahadur' with this objective. General Gordown comments, "The dragons teeth thus sown at Delhi in the blood of the martyred Guru Tegh Bahadur soon brought to harvest an abundant crop". (Gordon, 1905).

The very foundation of Guru Gobind's

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relentless resistance to injustice and oppression in the society reflected his conception of one God, "Oankar" (Transcendent-Immanent God). Guru Ji had firm faith in the One formless God and seeks his blessings. First and foremost, Guru Ji bows and pays homage to One Formless God (Sri Bhagauti), then sets mind on Guru Nanak and then recounts the names of the nine Gurus. The Lord first created Khanda, the double edged sword and then the manifest world. In Jaap Sahib, God is described as 'The Destroyer of Oppressors' and also, as 'Protector' and 'Cherishersof the Poor'. This firm faith was inculcated in the people. He reiterated that they are under the direct control and protection of God especially after the creation of the general body of the Khalsa.

A large number of reasons can be attributed to instituting the Khalsa in 1699. The emergence of Khalsa brotherhood had become foreseeable due to the exigency of the time and circumstances. The Tenth Guru had previously fought number of battles against the hill chiefs and the Mughals before creating the Khalsa. The ideological differences between Guru Gobind Singh and the Hill Chiefs intensified the situation for the Guru vehemently opposed idol worship and could not tolerate the exploiting the religious sentiments of the people.

Guru Gobind Singh wanted to lay foundation of such an organisation, which would imbibe in them the quality of a saint-soldier, morally, a saint and be an exemplar before other to get rid of calamities and difficulties for the same of establishing righteousness and freedom of conscience. Guru Gobind Singh was divinely inspired to emancipate mankind from fear and he has recorded the mission in Bachittar Natak:

For this purpose I came into this world.
God sent me for the sake of Dharma.
Wherever you are, spread Dharma.
Root out the oppressor and the wicked.

Senapat, a contemporary chronicler of Guru Gobind Singh, endorses this great mission of Guru Gobind SIngh, for the creation of Khalsa. He writes:

Guru Gobind Singh Gur Karanhar Kartar
Jagat udharan aayo janhu sab sansar
Jagat sing har be ko dorjan ke marbe ko
Sankat nivar be ko Khalsa banayo hai.
(Senapat & Singh, Ganda 1967)

It has been further mentioned by Senapat that the Guru wanted to create an organisation of such people who were geared to fight against the enemy in the battlefield.

Ganda Singh (ed.) 1967. Sainaptrachit "Sri Gur Sobha", Patiala, Punjab University.

Jaggi, Gursharan Kaur (ed.) 1989 "*Gurbilas Patshahi 10*" kirt Bhai Sukha Singh, Patiala, Bhasha Vibhag.

Padam, Piara Singh (ed.) 1997 "*Bansawali nama Dasam Patshahian Ka*" kirt Bhai Kesar Singh Chibber, Amritsar, Singh Brothers. □

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Message from "Vatican City" for Guru Nanak Prakash-purab 2017

[Christians and Sikhs : To Promote Education towards Universal Fraternity]

Dear Sikh Friends,

1. From the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, with great joy, we offer our most auspicious festal greetings to you on the occasion of Guru Nanak Prakash Diwas, celebrated this year on the 4th of November. May all your celebrations marking this holy feast strengthen the spirit of belonging and the bond of unity in your families and communities and thereby enhance peace and happiness among you.

2. This year our cherished practice of sharing with you a few thoughts on this occasion focuses on how we, both Christians and Sikhs can promote education towards universal fraternity. This theme, while assuming great relevance and significance in the present day global context of disturbingly growing apathy, indifference, intolerance, hatred and violence, also call for making greater efforts on our part towards promotion of universal fraternity.

3. More than ever now it is being felt across the globe that universal fraternity as the foundational principle, upon which the edifice of life of humans as individuals and communities must be raised, needs new expressions. **Because we are all related to one another as children of God, ensuring education about universal relationality of humans and our responsibility towards one another, as well as, the Cosmos, acquires a great importance for our times in order to advance the wellbeing and care of all persons. Echoing this need, Pope Francis unequivocally pointed out that "The common home of all men and women must continue to rise on the foundations of a right understanding of universal fraternity and respect for the**

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sacredness of every human life, of every man and every woman,.... (and) of created nature" (Address to the UN General Assembly, 25 Sept. 2015).

4. But unfortunately, ignorance and bias, greed and selfishness of some continue to create a situation where the 'other' tends to be treated as an inferior, a nonperson, or someone to be feared or even eliminated. These destabilise, damage and destroy the bonds of fraternity and fellowship.

5. Promotion of education towards universal fraternity, therefore, requires a prime focus, a renewed fervor and a new expression in shaping mind-sets and educating at all levels, starting with the family, the "wellspring of all fraternity" (Pope Francis, Message for the World Day of Peace, 2014).It is in the family that children, led by the example of their parents and other elders being first to learn to respect, love and care for others; to accept the differences; to be sympathetic towards the less fortunate and to love and care for nature. Educational institutions, religious teachings, the media, Governmental and non-Governmental agencies too a prominent role to play in inculcating this value among the masses. Interreligious and action, of course, play a pivotal role in generating peace, harmony and fraternity among people of diverse religious traditions.

6. As believers grounded in our own respective religious traditions and as persons with shared belief that the Fatherhood of God is the foundation of fraternity amongst us, may we, Christians and Sikhs, together with other believers and people of good will, rediscovering our connectedness with and responsibility towards one another and nature, promote, individually and collectively, education towards universal fraternity. Education towards universal fraternity, according to Pope Francis, is nothing but education for peace itself in the complimentarity of diverse sensitivities and of proper roles (cf. Address to Participants in the Plenary Session of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, 9 June, 2017).

Wish you all, once again, a happy Prakash Diwas of Guru Nanak Dev Ji!

- Jean Louis Tauran
[President - Pontical Council For Inter-Religious Dialouge]

- Bishop Miguel Angel Guixot,
MCCJ Secretary

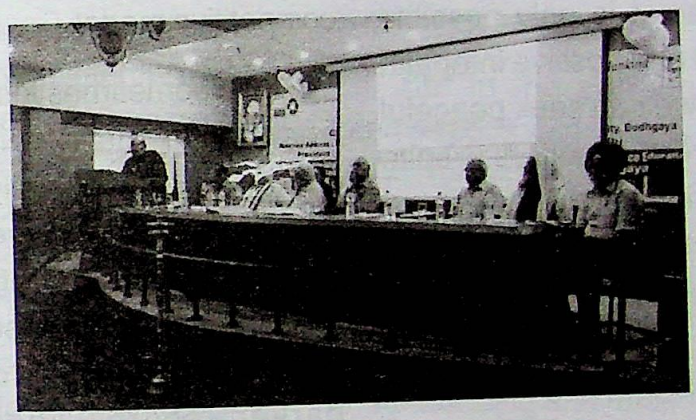
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An Interfaith Meet at Gaya: Concepts Discussed

*PROF DALVINDER SINGH GREWAL**

A 'National Seminar on Importance of Inter-Religious Understanding: Its implications for mankind' was held on September 24-25, 2016 at Magadh University Gaya, Bihar to assess, impress and propagate the importance of Inter-Religious Understanding and Its implications for mankind. The concept framed by the organizers was to sensitize and introduce legal aid programmes for strengthening democratic institutions and develop society's recourse for non-violent conflict resolution. In our present scenario, communalism has assumed a form of extreme religious chauvinism and antagonism towards the other religions and often is accompanied by exclusivist political mobilization. In the trouble torn world, where religious nationalism and communal politics has reigned supreme, interreligious dialogue has become matter of paramount concern to all the people who are interested in human dignity and rights. After the environment around has been vitiated by conflicts and hatred, mostly we need to give the social and psychological rehabilitation to the people as these things have been made invisible by conflict especially orphans, refugees and widows.



Secularism in South Asia refers not just to the separation of religion and state, but also to the constitutionally mandated public embrace of a plural religious culture. This entails the guarantee of rights of groups to organize, educate, observe customs, and propagate their faith. This all implies that we need to stand for equal respect to all religions and should oppose to the cynical manipulation of faith in the pursuit of power. Both the minority and majority communalism are a curse for communal harmony.

To maintain peace in our society despite divergent denominational identities is the main question in the presently chaotic

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times for which various kinds of dialogical engagements are needed. The dialogue that promotes 'engaged pluralism' is one that seeks understanding and accepts difference. Dianna Eck says: "The encounter in a pluralistic society is not premised on achieving agreement, but achieving relationship."

If we understand this point that difference is a part of nature and the art of difference managemet is only possible through meaningful and positive interfaith dialogue, and thus we can seek peaceful solutions to controversial matters in spite of differences. By giving people respect and honour these differences can become blessings. The result will be dialogue, sharing of views –that will result in intellectual development, which is a boon for everyone concerned.

This is a divine plan that differences will always remain there therefore we do not need to artificially seek to eliminate or overcome differences, but the solution is in embracing these differences. We need to follow one religion but respect all .This can become the formula of co- existence, in a multi cultural, multi religious society because here is no other feasible formula. We need to bring together people of good will in the common cause of fighting injustice and lifting up the poor. Religion should make us to work for collective salvation and not mainly to concentrate on personal salvation. As a famous Swami says: "The Task of the spiritually enlightened is not to promote one particular religion: much less to pit one religion against another" but in "identifying the good and the common factors that exist within all religions".

We need to create a world where religions interact in an integrative model as against the present conflict oriented competitive model.

We sometimes lose sight of the many positive forms of dialogue between communities especially Hindus, Muslims and Christians because of the high profile and well publicized conflicts of the past and present. Though the term "inter–religious dialogue "is a modern convention, but the earlier records show that different communities in India have encountered enormous curiosity and lively inter change between religions in matters of technology, arts, and sciences as well as spirituality. From the investigations of al-Biruni to the translation projects in the Mughal period, to the Bhakti and Sufi devotional moments and to the daily pious practice at countless shared sites, to the social and political activism of human rights advocates, inter religious dialogue between different communities had been our rich though complex legacy which is still going on in different known and unknown forms.

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Inter-religious dialogue in contemporary society is initiated to create better relationships between people belonging to different religions by bringing them together in dialogue: it thus aims to establish peace and harmony in a society which has been devastated by conflicts between religions. There are several important aspects in dialogue in this regard.

The uncritical reception and interpretation of 'religious conflicts' or 'conflicts in the name of religions', and the failure to appreciate that religious conflicts are often more than 'religious' conflicts and, often, not even 'religious' conflicts at all, 'religion' having become a mere useful peg on which to hang the violence.

The elite nature of dialogue in which grass root people (and their life and issues) either become silent objects of discussions or are passive listeners to whom the 'knowledge' of dialogue should be passed on. Accordingly, the elite nature of dialogue has ignored the actual living relationships among grass root people – who have different religious identities as well as multiple community identities – and has put restrictions on dialogue.

To be more effective in contemporary India, dialogue needs re-vision itself making use of the insights available from how grass root people understand religions, use religious and other identities, perceive 'religious' conflicts, and relate with their neighbours from other communities including religions in spite of conflicts. Especially the multiple identities exercised in grass root living – both crossing single fixed religious identities as well as crossing religious identities – can help those involved in dialogue to enhance their thinking and activities for constructing better models in their efforts for creating peace and harmony between people in the context of conflicts and violence.

But in the contemporary period, interreligious dialogue is not simply any conversation between people with different religious identities. Rather it is presented as an important step in understanding one's own religion and one's neighbours' religions, and thus a step towards better understanding and relationships between people of different religions.

The presupposition is that dialogue helps to eliminate religious conflicts and tensions because religions have the potential to further the cause of world peace, if the process is explicated through dialogue. Dialogue is an approach in which positive attitudes and openness to other religions are implied, the view being that such positive attitudes between members of different religions are necessary to create better relationships among humans in society. This positive attitude varies from showing mutual openness and mutual sharing among the participants while keeping the distinctive

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features of their respective religions, or affirming and acknowledging the differences between religions while emphasizing the unity of aim or intention of all religions, even though the latter is sometimes criticised in dialogue circles. Such dialogue is not just a practical activity, but it has become a sort of 'ideal stance' which is different from the 'actualities of dialogue'. In this approach, the dialogue promoters write about it or articulate it purely in terms of theory and principle. In formal dialogue, it is more than an ordinary two-way conversation for it refers to particular types of conversation, or conversation with particular attitudes. Thus the term dialogue has been conceptualised, esentialised and imbued with ideas which refer to meanings beyond conversation, such as positive attitudes and tolerant approaches.

One common notion in dialogue is that the level of religious misunderstanding is high especially among ordinary people or people at the grassroots and because of this they are vulnerable to being involved in religious conflicts. Therefore, it is claimed, these people have to be educated about dialogue to ensure the maintenance of communal harmony in the contemporary Indian context

The assumption that 'religion' or 'religions' contribute to violence, and the uncritical acceptance of this notion in dialogue has, in fact, set many limitations for dialogue. It is often overlooked that what is claimed as 'religious violence' often stems from socio-economic and personal struggles of people, and from the political intervention which plays with the religious identities of people in order to receive votes and to achieve political power. For instance, in India, what is termed 'religious conflicts', has been, at the roots, mostly a social issue involving caste domination and oppression, or economic struggles between people or people's groups, or political manipulations for power or even personal problems between people.

Questions such as how they evolve into 'religious conflicts' and how and why they are projected as such, and how these economic, political and social realities are overlooked in dialogue need attention.

In other words we can say this sympathetic study of religions other than one's own is an attitude of the modern mind induced by the recognition of the fact that plurality of faiths is not something contingent but rooted in the human situation and so if different religious communities are to live together in peace and amity, each must while believing in the truth of its own faith, try to find and assimilate truth in the faith of other communities. Though this understanding is very difficult to achieve because every religion is a unique entity with its history and there has not been the one uniform line of development, but it should not make us hopeless about the final end of the process of inter religious understanding because still at the level of mystical experience, the diversity of religions is resolved into unity.

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An eclectic approach can be developed to solve religious conflicts between the various traditions because finally it is religion which holds before man's imagination the vision and hope transcending all the limitations imposed by life temporal. Because there are two dimensions of religion, it has produced great saints and sages of highest caliber, and second is the role of organized religious communities which have fallen short of the ideal. Because religions have fought and quarreled, really for economic and political gains, but religion has been exploited for this purpose. Some political groups have used these conflicts to stress not only irrelevance of religion but even to denounce religious values .But how religion can win the battle against skepticism is possible only if thoughtful people belonging to various religions put up a united front.

Also, India had Sufi and Bhakti traditions in Islam and Hinduism respectively. Both Sufism and Bhakti traditions were based on respect for different religions. The poorer and lower caste Hindus and Muslims were greatly influenced by these traditions. The Sufi and Bhakti saints were highly tolerant and open to the truth in other faiths. They never adopted sectarian attitudes and were never involved in power struggles. They kept away from power structures. Muslim mystic thought in many ways. Shah Niaz Ahmad of Bareilly thus declared the 'Dialogue of life' from the perspective of daily coexistence, as the communities have engaged in this type of dialogue in one way or the other is the need of the hour. Though we cannot over look the value of formal dialogue between officials and elite but now scholars should pay attention to the "dialogue from below",just as we look to theology from below and so on.'

Can religions be put into single unified systems and differentiated from each other? Why are conflicts between religions often spoken about, and uncritically accepted in the dialogue circles? If there are many causes for conflicts why is religion claimed as the prime cause? What are the different ways people at the grassroots understand and perceive relationships between religions and how do they live their everyday life in such contexts, and how are these different from elite conceptions of religion and dialogue? Theoretically, the discussion of the limitations of dialogue in the present context may be started with observing the ambiguities in dialogue.

We need to inform public about religious intolerance, violence, human rights violations, caste, and woman rights.

Inter faith dialogue should be coupled with justice and we need to organize seminars training programmes for youth and dialogue events. And make possible the interaction of prominent intellectuals and activists of variety of religious backgrounds and perspectives. ☐

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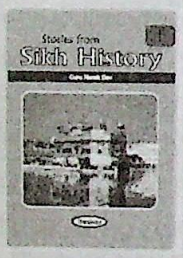
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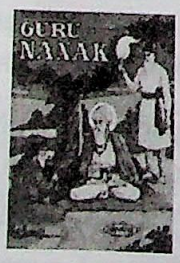
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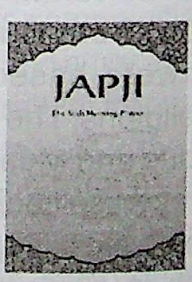
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The Concept of Guru and Disciple in the Philosophy of Guru Gobind Singh Ji

*Dr. Amrit Raina**

ਵਹਿ ਪ੍ਰਗਟਿਓ ਮਰਦ ਅਗੰਮਵਾ, ਵਰੀਆਮ ਇਕੇਲਾ।
ਵਾਹ ਵਾਹ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ, ਆਪੇ ਗੁਰੁ ਵੇਲਾ॥

"There is born a superman
An unparalleled warrior
Bravo, Bravo Gobind Singh
Thou are the Guru as well as the disciple"

[Varran Bhai Gurdas 41/1 –SGPC, Amritsar, 1964 P436]

In the opinion of Sikh Gurus a true teacher is like father, mother, brother and comrade. He is friend, guide and philosopher. Guru Gobind Singh shows his complete identification with his disciples

ਖ਼ਾਲਸਾ ਮੇਰੋ ਰੂਪ ਹੈ ਖ਼ਾਸ ॥ ਖ਼ਾਲਸੇ ਮਹਿ ਹੌ ਕਰੌ ਨਿਵਾਸ ॥

ਖ਼ਾਲਸਾ ਮੇਰੋ ਮੁਖ ਹੇ ਅੰਗਾ ॥ ਖ਼ਾਲਸੇ ਕੇ ਹੌਂ ਸਦ ਸਦ ਸੰਗਾ ॥

ਖ਼ਾਲਸਾ ਮੇਰੋ ਇਸ਼ਟ ਸੁਹਿਰਦ ॥ ਖ਼ਾਲਸਾ ਮੇਰੋ ਕਹੀਅਤ ਬਿਰਦ ॥

ਖ਼ਾਲਸਾ ਮੇਰੋ ਪਛ ਅਰ ਪਾਤਾ ॥ ਖ਼ਾਲਸਾ ਮੇਰੋ ਸੁਖ ਅਲਿਾਦਾ ॥

"Khalsa is my true image
In Khalsa do I dwell
Khalsa is my face and limb
With Khalsa do I live all time
Khalsa is my true faith
Khalsa is my own prestige"

[Guru Gobind Singh Sarab Loh]

There are many examples in the life of Guru Gobind Singh which show his boundless love for his disciples. He had full faith and confidence in them. He was always ready to sacrifice his all to uphold their dignity and honor. His disciples also loved him tremendously. This reciprocal love and confidence enabled him to rouse a sleeping nation. The life history of Guru Gobind Singh shows how a great Guru can transform the very life of his pupils. Books teach but personality educates. Example is better than precept, He was a Saint Soldier who through military training and love for sports infused such a high spirit of bravery in his disciples and filled them with spirit of valour and confidence.

"*Each one of the Sikhs will fight a Lakh and one fourth of a Lakh only then will I called Guru Gobind Singh*". The change was psychological. Men who had never touched a sword or Shouldered a gun became

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warriors. Confectioners and washer men, Sweepers and barbers became leaders of armies before whom the Rajas quailed and the nawab'scowared with terror(GC Narang : Transformation of Sikhism page 84). Thus the great Guru became a supersonal stepping stone for the success and perfection of his disciples . The great Guru was able to achieve this transformation of his disciples because he held them in great esteem and raised their social status. Like a true democrat he was fully conscious of the unbounded power of the people and society. In all humility he pays a glowing tribute to his disciples and people for all he has achieved in his life.

ਇਨਹੀ ਕੇ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਸੁ ਬਿਦਿਆ ਲਈ, ਇਨਹੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਸਭ ਸਤ੍ਰ ਮਰੈ ॥

ਇਨ ਹੀ ਕੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਕੇ ਸਜੇ ਹਮ ਹੈ, ਨਹੀ ਮੋ ਸੇ ਗਰੀਬ ਕਰੋਰ ਪਰੈ ॥

"Through their grace I have achieved all learning,

Through their help in battles I have slain all my enemies,

I was born to serve them, through them I have reached eminence,

What would I have been without their kind and ready help,

There are millions of insignificant people like me"

[Dasam Granth Page 716]

Educationally and psychologically this unbounded love and respect is sure to raise the morale of a pupil and raise him in the eyes of others and his own eyes. This was not merely a lip tribute paid by the Guru, He practically showed that he loved his disciples, He sacrificed all to save their honour and lives, He himself says " He who serves my people, pleases me, my possessions, my mind, my body and soul are ever at the disposal of my people (Dasam Granth page 716). When his wife didn't see her four sons in the assembly of the Sikhs she enquired about their wherebouts, the reply the Guru gave shows what a unaparalled ideal of sacrifice the Great Guru had for society in general and the humanity at large

ਇਨ ਪੁਤਰਨ ਕੇ ਸੀਸ ਪਰ ਵਾਰ ਦੀਏ ਸੁਤ ਚਾਰ ।
ਚਾਰ ਮੁਏ ਤੋ ਕਯਾ ਭਯੋ ਜੀਵਤ ਕਈ ਹਜਾਰ ॥

"What of thy four mother, what of thy four?

When lives the whole people, the khalsa here

Gone gone are thy four oh mother as sacrifice

For the lives of thousands more, all thy sons oh mother,

What if thy four are gone"

The highest contribution of Guru Gobind Singh in the educational field is the assignment of status of Guru to Holy Book. He gave practical shape to the statement of the sixth Guru, "The Book is the Abode of God". The Sikhs enquired from Guru

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Gobind Singh at the time of his death as to who would be their Guru in future and who would give them light and spiritual guidance. Satguru replied that they would get it from the Guru's shabad the Gurbani incorporated and conserved in the Adi Granth. I have infused my mental and bodily spirit into the Granth Sahib and the Khalsa. " O beloved Khalsa let him who desireth to behold me, behole the Granthsahib, obey the Granthsahib, It is the visible body of the Gurus and let him who desireth to meet me diligently search in its hymns" (Puran Singh-Guru Gobing Singh, Guru Gobind Singh Foundation , Page 102). The voice was stilled but not the word, the word abides forever.

At the time of his death he encouraged his disciples in these words, "When there are five Sikhs assembled who abide by the Guru's teachings know that I am there in their midst. Henceforth, the Guru shall be the Khalsa and the Khalsa the Guru. I have infused my mental and bodily spirit into the Granth Sahib and the Khalsa (Macaliffe - Vol 5 Page 243).

According to modern educationists teaching learning process is a co-operative process of the teacher and taught and it is best achieved by activity methods. Guru Gobind Singh was keenly aware of the educational social and military significance of sports and training in arms. He organized Martial exercises, Weapon training, Horse riding, Hunting Competitions, Archery, Musket Shooting and mock battles to train his disciples in the skill of arms in which he himself was an active participant. A great part of the day was spent in the training of these exercises. The hills around Anandpur Sahib begin to echo to the beating of war drums and military commands. He got made a war drum and named it Ranjit Nagara. The Sikhs at Anandpur Sahib were trained to carry on their daily programme to the beat of this drum. This trained them in regularity and military discipline. He made sword as a part of their uniform with special symbols and sacraments to protect themselves and others. Henceforth training in sports and arms became a specific feature of his educational policy which produced mighty soldiers like Banda Bahadur, Hari singh Nalwa and Akali Fulla Singh. By these practical activity methods he awakened the dormant energies of vanquished people and filled them with a laughty desire for social freedom and national ascendency.

Pen is mightier than sword. Guru Gobind Singh was a man of letters, a versatile genius, a writer par excellence. To awaken the slumbering masses and to create in them the spirit of self-reliance and self-confidence, he along with his 52 bards, produced huge literature steeped in Indian traditions. He arranged musical

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congregations in which the bards sang heroic songs which created the suitable environment to inculcate a sense of heroism in his soldiers. It is said that Chandi- di War came to be recited in congregations. Each verse, each line and each syllable of Chandi-di var breathes fire of life in the dead and inspires new courage in the blood of the reciters and listeners (D.P.Ashta page 54).

"Blest is his life in this world who repeats God's name with his mouth and contemplates war in his heart. (D.G.P.570)."

For Social reconstruction political awakening, religious national awakening and to remove the barriers of caste and creed, High and low, Rich and Poor, Guru Gobind singh made all the five Sikhs belonging to different castes, creeds and provinces ,made them to drink nectar from the same bowl at the time of nectar ceremony. Each Sikh of the Guru was a bhai, the brother of all. He stood for a secular religion and peaceful co- existence. He admonished his followers to recognize all mankind as one. "The temple and the mosque are the same . The Hindu worship and the Muslim prayer are the same." (D.G.P 19)

Guru Gobind Singh had great political insight. He was the first Indian leader who taught the principles of Indian constitution. His Khalsa was a democratic organization with faith in principles of equality, liberty and fraternity which have formed the basis of Indian Constitution. He believed in self government and organized the Sikh Community on Democratic lines. He fought against the political tyranny of the mughals. He prepared Banda Bahadur politically who fought various political battles against the mughals and was the first political leader of the Sikhs. His zafarnama, the epistle of victory is a lucid commentary on the political system of his times.

Guru Gobind Singh emphasized the all round development of the personality of his disciples. He wanted to make his Sikhs spiritually strong, mentally awakened, physically strong and healthy, emotionally balanced, able to earn their living through hard honest labour and contribute something for social reconstruction. The Guru thinks that the attainment of divine knowledge (Gyan Guru) helps in self realization. With the broom of divine wisdom the dirt of cowardice can be wiped away. It is avidya (ignorance) which forges fetters to bind the mind.One who with the help of gyan guru awakens himself develops his powers and potentialities, meditates over the name of Gods, recognizes himself and attains God (D.G.Page 709). With the broom of knowledge the cowardice of mind is removed and it becomes easier like Arjuna to fight in the battle of life.

Guru Gobind Singh made various practical efforts to educate people. It is said that he scattered around Damdama Sahib,

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now known as *Guru ki Kashi* to educate people. He established seats of learning at Poanta Sahib, Damdama Sahib, Amritsar and Anandpur Sahib. He sent 5 Sikhs to Banaras to learn Sanskrit. He declared Guru Granth Sahib as a Guru and ask the Sikhs to read it regularly. He made every effort to educate the people and saw that nobody was left uneducated. Pothis of Gurubani were made and distributed at the time of faires and gatherings. Congregations were held in the morning and evening where people were taught through Katha and Kirtan. The Knowledge of 3R's as well as skill in warfare henceforth became the essential equipment of a Sikh along with the gifts of horses and arms, he asked his followers to bring with them good books.

He asked his disciples not to refrain from righteous needs and fight fearlessly in the battle of life. His own life is a living example of leading life in Chardi Kala, being ever optimistic. After the martyrdom of his four sons and mother, he settled down at Damdama Sahib for short period. During his stay there he got written Guru Granth Sahib, made its several copies, got it translated, raised a huge army and made every effort to educate people. From a life of inaction he brought Banda Badhur to a life of action, From the life of a recluse he became an unparalleled hero.

To make his pupils morally strong and ethically sound, he asked them never to refrain from the right path. He who lives the right path is a real Sikh ,he is my master and I am his disciple.The example of Bhai Joga singh shows how the Guru comes to the help of a Sikh at the time of ethical fall pointing to the symbols worn by him that such moral failure doesn't behove a Guru's Sikh as he is carved in the Guru's image.

Love of mankind is love of God. This lesson was taught to the masses by the example of Bhai Kanyiha to serve water to the thirsty soldiers in the battle field by giving him balm to sooth the aching wounds of the needy soliders irrespective of caste and creed. He raised the status of women by extending the right of baptism from the same bowl along with men, take part in congregations without purda, wear the five emblems and get education and military training as is clear from the example of Mai Bhago and Sharan Kaur.

The very personality of Guru Gobind Singh riding on horse, holding the sword and falcon in his hands in full fledged Military Uniform with Kalgi on his head, Strong Stout body,awe inspiring valour on the face, looking like a Maharaja Soldier inspires his followers uptill now to fight in the battle field of life with valour and courage. His Khalsa has been carved in his own image.The unparalleled love of his disciples he commands uptil now is matchless in the history of the world. ❑

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Daan – Altruism

*Dr. (Bhai) Harbans Lal**

Daan is the second of the three doctrinal terms, Naam, Daan, Isnaan, that formed the basis of Guru Nanak's teaching. As stated earlier, an exhaustive treatment of Daanis not possible here, especially when one considers that there have been volumes written about it. I, myself, wrote many articles on the subject.

A simple translation of Daan in English is altruism; in Punjabi vernacular, *Daan* (Charity) is *a virtues quality of a perupkari* person but *Daan* is giving away or sharing of food, ,money, knowledge, time etc..

Daan is defined behaviorally as acting out of concern for the well-being of others, without regard to the practitioner's own self-interest. Biological altruism refers to behaviors that help the survival of a species without benefiting the particular individual who's being altruistic, a sort of hard-wired compassion.

In my religious tradition, Sikhism, Daan is both a type of meditation and societal engagement that exceeds the average levels of social cooperation. We give Daan to the needy, but we also supplicate for Daan of benevolence, right wisdom, Naam, and other God's gifts to bridge over our own shortcomings. We praise God for attributes of Mercy and Grace.

ਪਰਉਪਕਾਰੀ ਸਰਬ ਸਧਾਰੀ ਸਫਲ ਦਰਸਨ ਸਹਜਇਆ ॥

[SGGS: 533]

The Divine is an altruist, generous and benevolent, the beautifier of all, the embodiment of peace; the Blessed Vision (philosophy) of His is so rewarding!

Tangible Benefits

Modern research tells us that when we give without expectations of reciprocity, we experience the deep feeling of energy and fulfillment leading to quality happiness. Asking for charity (Daan) of Naam, one derives all benefits of a real meditation, and also ensures the health of mind and body.

Sikh theologian Bhai Gurdas describes the innate urge to do good as a deep and genuine fulfillment through altruism.

ਤਪਦਾ ਪਰਉਪਕਾਰ ਨੋ ਠੰਢੇ ਪਰਉਪਕਾਰ ਵਿਹਾਣੀ ।
ਅਗਨਿ ਬੁਝਾਏ ਤਪਤਿ ਵਿਚਿ ਠੰਢਾ ਹੋਵੈ ਬਿਲਮੁ ਨ ਆਣੀ ।

A Sikh gets fired up with an urge to engage in altruism that is chilled down by indulging in the altruistic actions. The altruistic activity extinguishes the fire in the hearts of life to cool it down without any delay. Bhai Gurdas, Vaar 29, Pauri 13.

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For Some a Trait

Bhai Gurdas went as far as saying that the trait of altruism is the most satisfying occupation; this is a conclusion one would reach after acquiring education in all specialties.

ਚਉਦਹ ਵਿਦਿਆ ਸੋਧਿ ਕੈ ਪਰਉਪਕਾਰੁ ਅਚਾਰੁ ਸੁਖਾਣਾ ॥ [Gurdas, Vaar 25, Pauri 9]

While offering his altruist help Bhagat Puran Singh is remembered as saying to the physically compromised, "Sorry for helping you, but it's a trait I picked up from my ancestor's thousands of years ago, and I just can't seem to get rid of it."

With such a belief, Bhagat Ji could not accommodate narcissism even if he wanted to. As I have written in the previous blogs, Bhagat ji was heroically altruistic. He displayed courage and generosity often in the face of unending barriers.

Conclusion

We live in a world with much need of help and moral rearmament. We also live in a mean-spirited tit for tat world (just watch any cable news reports) always feeding on narcissism. Only a culture of altruism as designed by holy spirits can save humanity. Further, altruistic behaviors effectively attract others to join in improving the world culture. The scripture says,

ਪਰਉਪਕਾਰੀ ਸੁਫਲ ਫਲਿ ਵਟ ਵਗਾਇ ਸਿਰਠਿ ਵਰੁਸਾਣੀ ।

ਚੰਦਨ ਵਾਸੁ ਵਣਾਸਪਤ ਚੰਦਨੁ ਜੋਇ ਵਾਸੁ ਮਹਿਕਾਣੀ । [Bhai Gurdas, Vaar 12, Pauri 13]

An altruist is a winning trait that distinctly nourishes the whole world. This individual and his/her selfless societal contributions are like sandalwood that lives among the bamboo vegetation that is always at the edge of striking at others to cause fatal fires, but altruist is there to always impart fragrance to the entire forest. ❑

The Sikh Review
Wishes its readers a very
Happy Gurpurab and
New Year

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Theories Of 'Creation' Of The Universe: Science Vs Gurbani!

*Dr. Manjit Singh**

"Much has been heard of late about the origin of the Universe, but the term is, in a way rather misleading. Nobody has ever been able to suggest how the material making up the earth, the sun, the stars and the galaxies came into existence. All we can do is to start from some basic assumption, and then work out a sequence of events ending up with the universe as we see it today. Either the material came into being at some particular moment in time, at least 10000 million years ago, or else it has always existed, in which case the universe has an infinite past."[1]

There are several theories in science which describe the initial state, origin and evolution of the universe. Two of these theories have caught the attention of the present day scholars. These theories are:-

I. Evolutionary Theory

II. Steady-state Theory

"According to evolutionary idea, all the matter of the universe was suddenly created from what may be called 'primeval atom'. This atom exploded sending material outward in all directions."[2]

Evolutionary idea of the universe is based on the General Theory of Relativity proposed by Albert Einstein. When Einstein proposed his theory of general relativity the universe was believed to be static. In the 1920s Alexander Friedmann and G. Lemaitre proposed a general relativistic model of the expanding universe. "Friedman's model universe begins with zero size and expands until gravitational attraction slows it down, and eventually causes it to collapse in upon itself..... in 1927 a professor of physics and Roman Catholic priest named Georges Lemaitre proposed a similar idea: if you trace the history of the universe backward into the past, it gets tinier and tinier until you come upon a creation event-what we now call the big bang."[3] say Stephen Hawking.

So according to the relativistic model if the galaxies are getting further apart now, they must have been closer in the past. If we look far enough back in time they must at some stage have been exceedingly closely packed. The matter was subject to enormous temperatures and pressures. "In

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the first moment of time, everything in the universe was compressed into an unbelievably dense form."[4] This observation provides the basis for the widely held view that the universe originated a limited time ago by expanding from a state of infinite compression in an event that has come to be known as the Big Bang.

Taking the Big Bang as the starting point of time scientists say, "In the beginning there was an explosion. Not an explosion like those familiar on earth, starting from a definite center and spreading out to engulf more and more of circumambient air, but an explosion which occurred simultaneously everywhere, filling all space from the beginning, with every particle of matter rushing apart from every other particle."[5]

Pulsating Universe Theory

Pulsating universe theory is a hypothesis which is a possible outcome of the Big Bang. One implication of the Big Bang theory is that the universe may grow and cold and die an ultimate death. This will happen if the universe expands forever. Although this scenario will destroy all life and ability of the universe to do work, the universe would itself survive for an infinite period of time. This would be the outcome if the expansion of the universe were what scientists call flat or open.

Alternatively in a closed universe the expansion will eventually stop. In this scenario the universe will begin to contract once expansion ends. Although contraction would be very slow at first, the contraction rate would accelerate and grow hotter and brighter until it ends in the 'Big Crunch',[6] in which it explodes into a singularity and gets crushed out of existence.

However, some scientists speculate that Big Crunch would not signal the end. They believe that perhaps another Big Bang would follow the Big Crunch, giving rise to a new universe of possibilities. The idea that Big Bangs follow Big Crunches in a never ending cycle is known as an Oscillating universe. Though no theory has been developed to explain how this could ever happen, it has a certain philosophical appeal to people who like the idea of a universe without end.

This theory was advocated among others by Dr. Alan Sandage, "Dr. Sandage thinks that some 12 billion years ago a great explosion occurred in the universe and that the universe has been expanding ever since. It is likely to go on expanding for 29 billion years more, when gravitation will halt further expansion. From then on, all matter will begin to contract to collapse upon itself in a process known as 'implosion'. This will go on for 41 billion years compressing matter into an extremely super dense state and then it will explode once again."[7] and creation will start again.

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This theory was popular in 1960's and 1970's but currently has fallen out of favor due to some reasons.

II Steady – State Theory

In complete contrast to the evolutionary theory i.e. big bang, stands the steady state theory. This theory was given in 1940's originally by British scientists Hermann Bondi and Thomas Gold. Fred Hoyle later supported this theory. According to this theory, "the universe has always existed, and will exist for ever, so that as old stars and galaxies die they are replaced by new systems, formed from material which is spontaneously created out of nothingness in some unexplained manner."[8] The universe is much the same at all times and that it never had a beginning and it is not aging. There is a continuous creation in the universe. Change is going on all the time, but the overall picture does not change. Individual galaxies are dying. In the space, created thereby, the new galaxies are being created by the matter created out of vacuum.

The steady-state theory is philosophically satisfying but unfortunately it has not stood up to observational tests. By examining very remote objects, we can see the universe not as it is now, but as it used to be in the remote past. On Hoyle's theory the galaxies would still be spread around in the same way. But this is not so, there are definite differences in distribution, so that the universe is not in a steady state, and the whole theory is wrong."[9]

So the Big Bang theory is taken as the valid description of early times. This is the foremost model that scientists use to describe the creation of the universe. Athough this model has not been able to give us the complete description of the creation of the universe; this model incorporates the talent of many individuals through the course of 150 years of study.

Gurbani totally rejects the steady-state theory of the universe. It does not admit the status of the universe as if it had always existed. It supports the evolutionary theory of the origin and evolution of the universe. It has references like that of Big Bang. Gurbani predicts the future of the universe also and says that this universe is not going to stay forever. This will definitely die oneday. Whatever is born will definitely die. Nothing is permanent in this universe. After a certain period this universe will be recreated. This creation-destruction-recreation will go on indefinitely.

According to Gurbani, when for countless ages there was utter darkness, there was no creation at all, suddenly a sound (of Onkar) appeared and millions of streams of existence started flowing.

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ਕੀਤਾ ਪਸਾਉ ਏਕੋ ਕਵਾਉ ॥ ਤਿਸ ਤੇ ਹੋਏ ਲਖ ਦਰੀਆਉ ॥[10]

ਵਣੁ ਤ੍ਰਿਣੁ ਤ੍ਰਿਭਵਣ ਪਾਣੀ ॥ ਚਾਰਿ ਬੇਦ ਚਾਰੇ ਖਾਣੀ ॥
ਖੰਡ ਦੀਪ ਸਭਿ ਲੋਆ ॥ ਏਕ ਕਵਾਵੈ ਤੇ ਸਭਿ ਹੋਆ ॥੧॥[11]

'Kawao' means word. Some scholars take this to mean that God uttered His word and the whole world appeared at once. But this is not proper interpretation. This is not in line with the true spirit of Sikh Gurus. According to Sher Singh, "Pasau does not mean a sudden creation. Pasau is from Pasarna: to expand, to spread or to evolve. Kawao means Word, but it does not mean an order for sudden appearance of the world. ..... Moreover the view of sudden appearance of the world is in contradiction with the Guru's ideas expressed elsewhere."[12]

Everything in this universe is subject to change. Nothing is permanent. Everything keeps on changing from moment to moment. The only thing that does not change is God in His Aphur state. Everything living or non-living being is changing at every moment. Due to the changing nature of universe it automatically leads towards destruction. As such the reality of the world is relative. This manifestation is transitory. The whole world is totally false; it is like a dream in the night. All that is seen is an illusion. Whatever is created shall be destroyed by death. The sky and the earth, the day and the night, the sun and the moon shall pass away; the hundreds of thousands of stars shall disappear. Emperors, rulers and leaders shall depart, and their homes shall be demolished.

ਸਗਲ ਪਾਸਾਰੁ ਦੀਸੈ ਪਾਸਾਰਾ ॥ ਬਿਨਸਿ ਜਾਇਗੋ ਸਗਲ ਆਕਾਰਾ ॥੫॥[13]

ਫਰੀਦਾ ਰੁਤਿ ਫਿਰੀ ਵਣੁ ਕੰਬਿਆ ਪਤ ਝੜੇ ਝੜਿ ਪਾਹਿ ॥
ਚਾਰੇ ਕੁੰਡਾ ਢੂੰਢੀਆਂ ਰਹਣੁ ਕਿਥਾਊ ਨਾਹਿ ॥੧੦੨॥[14]

ਸੇਖ ਹੈਯਾਤੀ ਜਗਿ ਨ ਕੋਈ ਥਿਰੁ ਰਹਿਆ ॥[15]

ਚਿੰਤਾ ਤਾ ਕੀ ਕੀਜੀਐ ਜੋ ਅਨਹੋਨੀ ਹੋਇ ॥ . ਇਹੁ ਮਾਰਗੁ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਕੋ ਨਾਨਕ ਥਿਰੁ ਨਹੀ ਕੋਇ ॥੫੧॥[16]

ਨਿਹਚਲੁ ਕੋਇ ਨ ਦਿਸੈ ਸੰਸਾਰੈ ॥[17]

ਜਗ ਮਹਿ ਕੋਈ ਰਹਣੁ ਨ ਪਾਏ ਨਿਹਚਲੁ ਏਕੁ ਨਾਰਾਇਣਾ ॥੧॥[18]

ਦ੍ਰਿਸਟਿਮਾਨ ਹੈ ਸਗਲ ਮਿਥੇਨਾ ॥[19]

ਜੋ ਦੀਸੈ ਸੋ ਚਾਲਸੀ ਕਿਸ ਕਉ ਮੀਤੁ ਕਰੇਉ ॥[20]

ਜੋ ਦੀਸੈ ਸੋ ਚਲਸੀ ਕੂੜਾ ਮੋਹੁ ਨ ਵੇਖੁ ॥[21]

ਜੋ ਉਪਜੈ ਸੋ ਕਾਲਿ ਸੰਘਾਰਿਆ ॥[22]

After destruction where will this universe go? About the last abode of the universe Gurbani states that the universe has emerged from the Absolute Lord and ultimately it will merge in the same Absolute Lord. From the infinity of forms, it returns into its original singularity.They were created from the Sunn, and they will merge into the Sunn.

ਜਬ ਉਦਕਰਖ ਕਰਾ ਕਰਤਾਰਾ॥ ਪ੍ਰਜਾ ਧਰਤ ਤਬ ਦੇਹ ਅਪਾਰਾ॥ਜਬ ਆਕਰਖ ਕਰਤ ਹੋ ਕਬਹੂੰ॥ਤੁਮਮੈ ਮਿਲਤ ਦੇਹ ਧਰ ਸਭਹੂੰ॥[23]

ਸਗਲੀ ਬਣਤ ਬਣਾਈ ਆਪੇ ॥ ਆਪੇ ਕਰੇ ਕਰਾਏ ਥਾਪੇ ॥
ਇਕਸੁ ਤੇ ਹੋਇਓ ਅਨੰਤਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਏਕਸੁ ਮਾਹਿ ਸਮਾਏ ਜੀਉ

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॥੯॥੨॥੩੬॥[24]

ਸੁੰਨਹੁ ਉਪਜੀ ਸੁੰਨਿ ਸਮਾਣੀ ॥[25]

ਜੋ ਦੀਸੈ ਤੁਝ ਮਾਹਿ ਸਮਾਨਾ ॥ [26]

When the universe destroys and merges with the God, then God creates it again as and when He wills so. In this way Gurbani gives the concept of the cyclic nature of the universe.

ਅਨਿਕ ਜੁਗਾਦਿ ਦਿਨਸ ਅਰੁ ਰਾਤਿ ॥ ਅਨਿਕ ਪਰਲਉ ਅਨਿਕ ਉਤਪਾਤਿ ॥[27]

ਕਈ ਬਾਰ ਪਸਰਿਓ ਪਾਸਾਰ ॥[28]

ਸਭ ਦੁਨੀਆ ਆਵਣ ਜਾਣੀਆ ॥੩॥[29]

ਸਹਸਾ ਇਹੁ ਸੰਸਾਰੁ ਹੈ ਮਰਿ ਜੰਮੈ ਆਇਆ ਜਾਇਆ ॥[30]

From the above discussion it can be safely concluded that as far as the origin of the universe is concerned Gurbani is in conformity with Evolutionary Theory that creation of the universe followed a specific sound. This sound has been given different names by both the disciplines. As regards the oscillating theory of the universe scientists are not unanimous about the death and rebirth of the universe. The main reason for this is that they are not certain whether the universe will die one day or it will stay forever. Whereas Gurbani is of the firm view that universe is not going to stay forever. It is bound to die one day. After death it will be created again as and when God desired so.

In this way Gurbani supports Big Bang as well as Oscillating theory of the universe. But point to be noted is that arguments in Gurbani about the creation of the universe were given much earlier than that of science. The period of Gurbani stretches from 1173 A.D. to 1708 A.D, whereas in scientific cosmology the Evolutionary Theory which is based on the General Theory of Relativity was proposed first by Albert Einstein in 20th century only. Rest of the principles were formulated later on. In this way Gurbani leads ahead of science in matters of the creation of the universe.

The "Steady-state" theory of the Universe does not find favor with any one of the disciplines. □

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ਸਾਂ ਪਰਮ ਅਕਾਲ ਸਹਾਇ ॥

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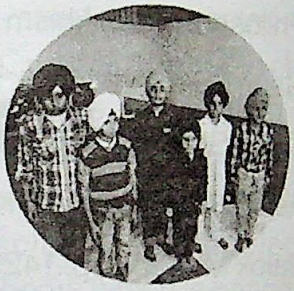
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Zafar-Nama of Sri Guru Gobind Singh ji

*JASBIR KAUR AHUJA**

AUTHOR'S NOTE

I never thought that I would be able to translate the '**Zafar Nama**'of great Guru Gobind Singh ji Maharaj till I had the opportunity of having the blessings of Rev Sw. Tapasayanaadaji Maharaj, President, Ramakrishna Math, Madras. During my pilgrimage to the South in 1990, we were put near the Math. And we went to see revered Swamiji in the evening of 18th July, 1990. When I went to see him in his Math office next morning, he advised me to write on the Sikh Gurus. He promised to publish them in *Vadanta Kesari,* a magazine of the Ramakrishna Math, Madras, and later on in book from. He encouraged me by saying that my English was good. While I brought to his notice my many pre-occupations, the thought of his concern over the present Sikh image pained him. Though I was not mentally prepared, ultimately I thought I should, for a start – translate Zafar-Nama from Persian into English. My respected father, S. Manohar Singh Sarhadi has studied deeply the Zafar-Nama in Persian; and thus I would have the opportunity of his help too. But it was a very demanding job. The ideas were revealed to me in Punjabi, and he would always insist that the translation in English must catch the spirit of the Guru's thoughts. It is, therefore, a pleasure to acknowledge my debt of gratitude to my revered father who has laboured with me at every step. At last, with the Grace of God, it was completed. On 9th August 1991, I despatched the transcript of Zafar-Nama to Revered Swamiji. I was shocked to know that he had gone into a coma. To my dismay, he attained *Maha-Samadhi* on 3rd October 1991 without seeing the outcome of his encouragement. The transcription has since been published in The Sikh Review in the September and and October, 1996 issues.

Guru Gobind Singhji is one of the greatest heroes of human history. The world at large knows him for the spirit of sacrifice as a rare martyr who gave his all for Dharma in the service of humanity. As a great Karma Yogi, he fought the evil forces giving persona direction to his followers. He is a rare sair soldier who made Khalsa, his followers, s

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unique that he submitted himself to the collective will of the Khalsa as God's soldiers. He raised them from the position of passive and peaceful devotees of God to courageous and tough fighters for righteousness. For Guru Gobind Singhji, the means always determined the quality of ends, as is evident from his following prayer to God:

O great God, grant me this boon, I should never waver from doing righteous deeds.

I should never fear fighting the evil forces in the battle of life.

Instead, Let my self-confidence ensure my victory.

In the heart of my heart, I should ever long.

To sing thy praises like a Sikh.

And when the hour of mortality of this body arrives,

I should die fighting in the battle field with unbounded courage. (Swaiyya)

Guru Gobind Singh, the son of martyr Guru Tegh Bahadur and great grandson of the martyr Guru Arjun Dev laid his all, at the altar of the Almighty, namely, his father, mother, his four sons, and even his own life, not only for his own followers but for the people of all the faiths, indeed for all mankind.

History bears witness that the Hill Rajas of the Shivalik principalities north and east of Anandpur in Northern India, were jealous of the popularity of Guru Gobind Singh, though he never threatened them nor won any territory for himself. It was the need of the time that great Guru was born with a Divine Mission. He explains this in his autobiography, Bachitra Natak, that God sent him on this earth:

To spread righteous Religion
And to uproot evil doers.

Guru Gobind Singh never considered himself as an incarnation of God. And did not approve the idea of Avatar for his ownself. According to him, he had been assigned the specific above mentioned mission by the supreme Lord.

The seat of the Guru, Anandpur Sahib, was situated in the state of Kahlur. Then enjoying nominal autonomy, along with other similar hill principalities. In fact, these hill states were obliged to pay tributes to the Mughal overlords. Kahlur was then being administered by Raja Bhim Chand from whose father Guru Tegh Bahadur had bought the land, then known as Makhowal. At this place, the Guru established another Sikh centre and named it Anandpur besides the one already at Kiratpur, at the distance seven miles, situated in the state of Hindur, where the forefathers of Guru Gobind Singh had been living for sometime. The state of Kahlur and Hindur were not on good terms. Bhim Chand did not look with equanimity the growing influence of the Sikhs under Guru Gobind Singh, because of their continued good relations with the state of Hindur. He also looked askance at the Guru's emphasis

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on the establishment of a casteless and classless society, which was at complete variance with Hindu basic beliefs.

The Raja of Kahlur himself went to the South to place his case against the Guru before the Emperor Aurangzeb personally. He was accompanied by the other Hill Rajas. The Emperor had already received complaints against the Guru, from his own officials in respect of his awakening the public to live fearlessly. As per routine, the implementation of orders against the Guru was assigned to Wazir Khan, the Faujdar of Sirhind.

Despite the joint efforts of the Mughals, on Anandpur Sahib were foiled by the Guru. As a last resort, the Emperor himself sent a signed oath, promising that he was anxious to meet the Guru to settle by negotiations. The Mughal commanders and the Hill Rajas, too, took oaths promising safe arrangement if the Guru should evacuate Anandpur.

But the solemn promises were broken. When the Guru was proceeding towards Ropar, he was pursued by the enemy, while crossing the flooded river Sarsa. The Guru's mother and his younger two sons, Sahibzada Zorawar Singh and Sahibzada Fateh Singh. Aged nine and seven years respectively, were separated from the main party. Later on. They fell into the hands of Mughals, at the complaint of Gangu, who was a cook in the Guru's kitchen. Then the soldiers took them to Sirhind. Faujdar of Sirhind forced them either to accept Islam or face the consequences. The children boldly refused to accept Islam. Therefore, at the behest of the Nawab, the children were bricked alive in the wall, and beheaded with sword at Sirhind. Grandmother, Mata Gujari ji, expired in the prison on hearing the tragic end of her two beloved grandsons. Now, at this place stands a great historical Gurdwara Fatehgarh Sahib, in the sacred memory of these innocent children, where followers of all the faiths come to pay reverence.

The Guru then reached Chamkaur (Ropar district) and entered into a large building, known as **Kachi Garhi**. As per **Zafar Nama** that is, the epistle of victory the Guru, with his forty companions, was besieged in Kachi Garhi, by a huge army. His elder son, Ajit Singh, aged eighteen and Jujhar Singh, aged fourteen, fought against the enemy heroically, and gave up their lives in this brave fight. When no resistance was possible, the Guru left the place, with three companions, leaving two Sikhs behind on the spot, to engage the enemy, unable to kill or capture the Guru left Chamkaur in December 1704.

At this juncture, the Guru was left alone in the thorny wilderness of Machhiwara in Ludhiana district. His three companions were separated from him in the darkness of night. For days, he found no shelter. But in spite of all these turmoils. The Guru was in full communion the spirit Divine.

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One day, he was lying asleep on the cold earth, when the three separated companions. Bhai Daya Singh, Dharam Singh and Man Singh arrived by sheer coincidence. Though physically weak, he was in beatitude spiritually. At this juncture he sang a song which is symbolic of his mood.

We, the devotees must tell our plight to the Lord.

Without Him, the luxury of soft beds is agony

The flask of drinks are like a cross,

Pleasures of Palaces are like living among snakes, if thou art away

The goblet is poison and the cup a dagger.

I would rather love this state with my beloved Lord,

than live in the burning hell with strangers.

Thereafter, the Guru reached Jatpura, where the local Chief Rae Kalha served him. Hearing and seeing the sufferings of the Guru, the devout Muslim shed tears and condemned the oppressor. Since the Guru was being pursued by the Mughal forces, he took leave of Rae Kalha. At last he moved towards Dina-Kangra, which are two small villages in the Moga Tehsil of the district Faridkot.

In 1706, at Dina, he composed this historic letter, Zafar Nama, and sent it to Aurangzeb, through Daya Singh and Dharam Singh. It was in reply to his letters of invitation, which the Guru had received from the emperor. The Guru replied very frankly that he had no faith in his promises or his solemn vows on the holy Qur'an, because the emperor had always been making false promises in his life, was treacherous and deceitful also. Though he was a monarch and general, yet he lacked the true spirit of religion. Referring to the cruel murder of his sons, he said, "what though my four sons have been executed, there lives the Khalsa in thousands. They all are my sons. What bravery is it to extinguish a few sparks you have instead ignited the devastating flames."

The Guru explained that he had taken up arms only because he had exhausted all other means of redress. He also said "If I had not believed your word and your oath on the Qur'an. I wouldn't have left my town. If I had known that you are cunning like a fox. I would not have been here today."

The epistle is written in classical Persian. Which was the court language at that time. It is a unique work in the history of heroic literature in verse form. The theme is in keeping with its tittle and indicates the sublimity of the saint-soldier and hero. The letter indicates loftiness of the Reedemer addressing an individual of temporal status.

The emperor, though a mighty monarch and general, lacked the tolerance

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of true religion. He and his generals violated the vows taken on the Holy Qur'an, only to subdue the Guru. Reading the letter, about his own brutal acts, even the heart of Aurangzeb was touched. It awakened his dormant conscience and created in him a mood of true repentance. The day he read the letter, he was confined to bed. He called his scribe and dictated a letter to his son. And this is the last letter of his life. Which acknowledges his moral defeat.

Guru Gobind Singh, the great Radeemer of humanity, made Aurangzeb repent for his sins. The Guru awakened his conscience to pray to the Almighty and repent for his cruel deeds. This is Guru's victory, confirming the faith that truth is evergreen. The false splendor of the emperor lies buried under the earth. Whereas the true glory of the Guru shall live till eternity, and inspire humanity to fight for human dignity and liberty. ❑

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Badshah-Darvesh Guru Gobind Singh

*R. M. CHOPRA**

Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth in succession to Guru Nanak in the pontifical order of the Sikhs, was born a prince yet he chose to remain a mendicant; he was a saint whom circumstances converted into a warrior, but in the heart of his heart he remained a saint. He perfected a new religious discipline by breaking the age-old shackles of ignorance, superstition, caste, birth, creed and station, and elevating the lowest equal in all ways to the highest, Maintaining complete adherence to oneness of God, inner cleanliness, in humility and service, as propounded by the house of Nanak, he gave a new purpose of life by following the path of righteousness and giving protection to the oppressed. He abolished succession by heredity and restored to the people confidence. Courage and conviction in their spiritual and temporal matters. He revolutionised the Sikh faith by creating not merely a community of warriors, but men who would, even during war-time never forsake God and whose victories would be for the sake of *dharma* and not for self-glory or greed.

He was the son of a martyr, a great grandson of a martyr and himself along with his four sons, his mother and all those who were close to him, without ever yielding, laid down his life for the sake of his firm convictions and *dharma*. All this he was able to achieve in a life span of mere two score and two. The life story of this saint-soldier is very fascinating indeed.

Govind was born in A. D. 1666 at Patna. He was barely nine years old when he succeeded to Guruship and Ninth Guru of the Sikhs, Guru Tegh Bahadur. His chief and senior followers decided that it was not safe for one so young to be exposed to the perils of enmity and wrath which the pontificate of the Sikhs had earned by giving protection to those oppressed by the Mughal Emperor, Aurangzeb. He was, therefore, taken to Anandpur, a small settlement away from the hub of activity which the late Guru had founded in Shivalik Hills, at the foot of the Himalayas. For practically 20 long years, Guru Govind lived in relative obscurity in this retreat. During his stay at Anandpur and

**The author, eldest son of late Dr. Hira Lal Chopra, one of the founders of The Sikh Cultural Centre, is a noted writer and scholar in his own right.*

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its neighborhood, in the formative period of his youthful life, he devoted himself to meditation, holding morning and evening religious services, strenuous physical exercises to remain fit, learning art or governance and, above all, to in-depth study of holy scriptures, treatises of yore and religion with a view to prepare himself for the high responsibility which had fallen on his shoulders, He got himself well versed in Sanskrit, Persion, Braj Bhasha and Panjabi. It was here that he wrote Dasam Granth, the Book of the Tenth King and Vichitra Natak, the strange Drama, among others.

The *Dasam Granth* is the contribution of Guru Gobind to the Sacred Books of the Sikhs and it shows how deeply he studied holy scriptures of the Hindu religion, not so much for religious inspiration as imbibing. In the fullest measure, the national traditions and culture of his race which had been cast to oblivion by long tyrannical rule of the invaders. He kept strictly to the teachings of the earlier Gurus about the Unity and Oneness of God, the inhumanity of caste and the meaninglessness of accumulated outdated custom.

The contents of the *Dasam Granth*, which is mostly in Braj Bhasha, inclide

1. *Jap*, or the meditation.
2. *Akal Ustiti*, or the praises of God and the denunciation of ritual, superstition, ignorance and cant.
3. *Chandi-di -Var* (in Punjabi), or ballad of Durga, the exploits of the Goddess of war and how she defeats demons of evil.
4. *GyanPrabodh*, or the saying of wisdom.
5. *Shabad Hazare* or devotional hymns.
6. Thirty three Swayyas, or the praises of the one immortal, unknowable God of wonder and grace.
7. *Khalsa Mahima,* or words in praise of the Khalsa.
8. *Shastra Nam-mala*, or verses in praise of many arms.
9. *Zafar Nama* (in Persian). Or the Epistle of Victory, addressed to Empreor Aurangzed.

(10) *Hikayats*, or legends and tales.

The Guru also says that in his earlier birth, he was a great *Yogi*, performing *tapas* in the Himalayas at a place called *Hem Kunda*, "where one is face to face with the seven peaks. I had no desire to come to earth, being merged in God. But my lord the God said, "I establish thee my son. Go, and make my path (panth) manifest to the world. Thou spread my religion here as well as there, and destroy whoever doeth evil."

His mission which he proclaims in his *Vichitra Natak*, is :

"For this purpose was I born,

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And to spread the religion the Lord appointed me:

Go and spread the righteousness everywhere

And seize and destroy the wicked and the tyrannical."

And again he says –

"For this purpose was I born,

And this let all the virtuous understand:

To advance righteousness, to emancipate the good,

And to destroy all evil-doers root and branch."

This, it may be observed, is reminiscent of the famous verse in the Bhagvat Gita (Iv) (8) where Krishna says:

"Paritranaya sadhunam

Vinashya ca duskritam

Dharma samsthapanarthaya

Sambhavami yuge – yuge."

(For the protection of the good, by the destruction of the wiched and for the establishment of righteousness, I come into being from age to age)

It may be mentioned that Guru Gobind Singh's occupies a special place in literature. It excels in the choice of words and phrases, in sweep of imagination and mastery over metre; so vast is its canvas that few equal it the annals of literature.

The first step which Guru Gobind Singh took in order to give effect to his ideals and mission was to organize the Sikhs into a Vaisakh in A. D. 1699, he announced the establishment of the Khalsa (the pure ones or the Liberated ones) and laid down that a disciple must take *pahul* (Baptism) and wear the five K's being **Kesh. Kara, kanga, katch and Kirpan.** These five are in themselves extremely symbolic. He further laid down that a true Sikh must wholly dedicate himself to the faith and to him as the Guru. The Sikhs must be prepared for *Kirtnash* (loss of fame), *Kulnash* (loss of family), *Dharmanash* (loss of orthodox religion). *Karmanash* (loss of karma) their devotion to Khalsa and its pontiff. He made it obligatory that they must add the suffix *"Singh"* or "Lion" to their names. By these teachings he made the Khalsa disciplined army under the control of one dominating mind dedicated to the service of God.

The greatest achievement of Guru Gobind Singh was his declaration that the mission of the Gurus had ended with him, and the Sikhs in future were to seek the guidance of God only in the collective voice of the community and in the sacred writings of the ten Gurus. By this decision, he saved the community from a hereditary theocracy.

For over 600 years the Hindus of the Punjab had been subjected to the Muslim

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rule. During that long period, not only had their political independence vanished, but their manliness of spirit had been practically extinguished. Punjab as the doorway of Hindustan was the one area which had been continuously under oppressive autocratic rule.

The gradual transformation of Nanak's disciples into a martial community commencing from the time of Guru Har Gobind and culminating in the formation of the Khalsa by Guru Gobind Singh in A. D. 1699 gave to the Hindus of the Punjab a new hope, a new feeling of self-respect and, in time of persecution. They turned to the Gurus of the Sikhs for help and support. According to Guru Gobind Singh, it was not power, but ethics that must determine the polity of a nation. And a nation must consist of a whole people, not society broken up by artificial barriers of caste, colour, creed or a race. Though he fought both the Mughals and their Subedars, the Hindu Hill Cheifs and others for the righteous cause, he inculcated nothing but respect for the other man's faith. Where, then, lies the distinct contribution of Guru Gobind Singh? The opinions of some of the historians of Guru Gobind are relevant and illuminating:

Dr. Gokul Chand Narang says, "though he did not actually break the shackles that bound his nation. He had set their souls free, and filled their hearts with a lofty longing for freedom and ascendency." While praising the merits of Guru Gobind, Sayyad Mohd. Latif a champion in the field, a king on his *masnad* and a *faqir* in the society of the Khalsa."

In the estimate of Sardar K. M. Panikkar: **"The political effects of Gobind's twelve years of activity in the vital province of the Punjab was completely shattered at the time of Aurangzeb's death. The military tradition of the Khalsa, practically eradicated the vestige of Muslem authority in the 150 years that followed his death. The Punjab, which had for 700 years been entirely under Moslem occupation, again became a free province under the successors of Gobind; and undoubtedly what made this possible was the strength, solidarity and the national ideals which Gobind gave to the Hindus in general and his own Sikh community in particular."**

In the words of Prof. I. Banerjee, "It is undeniable that Guru Gobind Singh must be counted among the greatest of Indians of all ages. The object he attempted was great and laudable and the means which he adopted were such a comprehensive mind could alone have suggested..... Guru Gobind Singh was first and foremost a religious leader. None but person of a saintly disposition, highly spiritual and a complete

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resignation to the Will of God could have behaved as he did during the acute crisis of his life. "Prof. Banerjee further goes on to say, "A man who preached that 'the temple and the mosque are the same, could not have been the enemy of a community or a class."

According to Dr. Gopal Singh, "In organising a socio-political body of spiritually-awakened, but earth-aware people who were to spearhead the movement for the Liberation of a whole society, and self-sufficient peace of the spirit, or the material well-being of an individual. In the transformation of a whole corporate society thereof a well-knit, dynamic, conscious and frontal organization deriving its authority from, and working solely in the interest of, the whole people, in every detail of their life whole people, in every detail of their life ...In short, it may be said that whereas Guru Nanak gave meaning to life, Guru Gobind invested death with a new purpose."

In the final analysis, it can be said that Guru Gobind Singh was a great leveler of society, unifier of India, transformer of the weak into the strong, a great propounder of a strict moral code, respector of women. Enemy of the corrupt and the tyrant, protector of the unprotected, a poet in Persian, Hindi and Punjabi, a leader or not only the Sikhs but of the entire human race. His achievements in the fields of politics, social reform, literature, establishment of peace and moral uplift are many.

It would be in the fitness of things if all the youth of our country can profitably emulate his high ideals and work constructively for the re-building of India of Guru's dreams, the need of which is greater and more relevant today than ever before, our country can, in the global context, lead the vanguard of peace, progress and prosperity. □

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Creation of Khalsa on Vaisakhi by the Almighty Hero-Guru Gobind Singh Ji

*Dr. (Mrs) Harleen Kaur**

Guru Gobind Singh Sahib in one of his poems defines "The Khalsa" as :

"He who repeats night and day the name of Him,

Who has full love and confidence in God,

Who bestows not a thought on any but one God,

Whose enduring light is inextinguishable,

Who puts no faith in fasting and worshipping cemeteries and monasteries,

Who only recognises the one God and makes no fetish, Of pilgrimages, alms, charities and austerities

He is recognised as a true member of the Khalsa,

In whose heart the light of the Perfect One shines."

According to Guru Gobind Singh ji, The Khalsa was a saint-soldier wedded to the two-fold ideal of Bhagti and Shakti. He was to combine self-respect with humility. Guru Gobind Singh Sahib though a creator of the Khalsa regarded himself as their servant. He said, "To serve them pleases me the most; no other service is so dear to my soul." The Khalsa was given a position equal to that of the Guru. The Guru consists of two parts: the body and the Name. The Guru nominated the "Khalsa", as his body and "Guru Granth Sahib" as the embodiment the Name. That is why we use the title of Guru-Khalsa. The Guru acknowledged his debt to the Khalsa in one of his verses.

There has been quite a controversy on how the "Khalsa" was created by Guru Gobind Singh Ji in 1699 AD. The incident, in many different ways, has been narrated by different scholars who have either copied their predecessors or given an account of the "Vaisakhi Khalsa Creation" in a manner which suited their own logic. So far none of the accounts have a definite ring of truth in them. There are lot of sikh researchers having their own views on the significance of baisakhi.

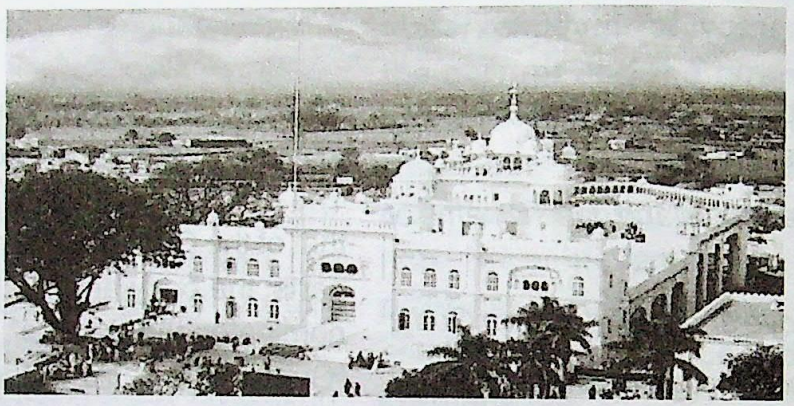
In early 1699 Guru Gobind Singh Ji sent out messages to his followers to make

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a special effort to attend the Vaisakhi festival. So 200,000 people gathered at the holy city of Anandpur Sahib most of them were from the Punjab but many of them were from Cuttack (Orissa), Bidar (Mysore), Gujrat , Kabul and Kandhar (Afganistan). After the morning service Guru Ji appeared before them to convey his special message, which goes like-



"Sikhs of Guru Nanak, you have all gathered here, I welcome you all."This goddess of All Steel (referring to the sword) has to be worshipped today. It has to be pleased for the sake of Dharma. Will any one of you come forward to offer his head before me?"

There was complete silence, some worried that Guru Ji may call upon them by name.When Guru Ji demanded someone's head for a third time a Khatri from Lahore stepped forward. Guru Ji immediately took him to the nearby tent, a thud was heard from within and Guru ji appeared with his sword dripping with blood. The same demand was repeated and four more times Sikhs stepped up and offered their lives to Guru Ji.After some time Guru Ji came out of the tent along with the five Sikhs now dressed in saffron coloured clothes with swords dangling from their sides and a lustrous glory radiating from their faces. They were:

- Became Bhai Daya Singh Ji Kahtri, born in Lahore (Punjab) on 1669
- Became Bhai Dharam Singh ji Jat, born in Delhi (Hastinapur) on 1666
- Became Bhai Himmat Singh ji .water-carrier, born in Jagan-Nath Puri (Orissa), 1661
- Became Bhai Mokham Singh ji . Calico-printer born Duwarka (Gujrat, India) on 1663
- Became Bhai Sahib Singh ji Barber, born in Bidar (Karnataka, India) on 1662

Guru Ji poured pure water from the river Sutlej into a large iron vessel in which *Patasey* (sugar candy) brought by Mata Sahib Devan were added. Guru Ji stirred the water with a Khanda (double edged sword) he recited Japji Sahib, Jaap Sahib, Sudha Swayyas, Chaupai Benti

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and Sri Anand Sahib, and thus turned it into Amrit.(nectar of immortality). He administered the Amrit to the Panj Payarai (the five beloved) and then knelt in front of them and asked them to repeat the following lines:

Khalsa is my own form and shape, I live in my Khalsa.

Khalsa is my brave friend, he is my perfect and true Guru.

With one tongue it is difficult to sing the praise of the Khalsa fully.

What I am saying is nothing untrue, I am doing so with God and Guru Nanak as my witness.

After that, Guru Gobind Singh Sahib laid down the following duties for the Khalsa:

I. The Khalsa is to worship one God and read Nitname (Five Banis) and daily meditate on the Name.

II. He is to keep the symbols (Panj Kakar) and to lead his life according to the Guru's teaching. Gurmantra is Waheguru and the Basic creed is Moolmanlra.

III. He has no caste after joining the brother-hood ; he has to repudiate non-Sikh rites and ceremonies, and follow only Sikh practices.

IV. He is not to commit 'any of the four misdeeds (Kurahat) namely, the shaving or cutting of hair, eating Halal meat, adultery and the use of tobacco or any other intoxi-cant.

V. He is not to commit any of the social offences (Tankhah), such as giving dowry, using liquors and intoxicants, raising monuments over graves and associating with apostates.

VI. He must contribute one-tenth {daswand) of his income for religious purposes.

VII. He is to serve the sangat in all ways

VIII. He must practice arms and be ready defend the weak.

Meaning and the significance of Symbols-Panj Kakar as given by the al mighty are :

Symbols or outward signs are a mode of discipline. A person who enters the Panth (Khalsa Community) will gladly embrace all its tenets and symbols. Symbols test the disciple's firmness and strength of faith. They indicate the type of character the wearer should have. He must be proud of being a Sikh, even though it may cost him his life. Secondly this common appearance and uniform ensures easy recognition, as one can easily spot a Khalsa in a crowd. Each symbol has its own use and psychological significance.

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I. Underwear (Kachha) ensures agility and briskness. It is a mark of perpetual readiness. It also stands for chastity.

II. Wrist-band (Kara) is a sign of restraint and bondage. It indicates that one is a devotee of the Guru. A look at the wrist-band will bring shame to a Sikh when he does any misdeed.

III. Sword (Kirpan) is an emblem of power and courage. It is to be used primarily as an instrument of defence.

IV. Unshorn Hair (Kes) is an emblem of the saints and Rishis of the past.

V. Comb (Kanga) is necessary to keep the hair clean and in shape. The hair make a Khalsa look exactly like Guru Gobind Singh Sahib and enable him to behave exactly like the Guru.

Guru Gobind Singh Sahib said, "The Khalsa is my special for ; I live in the embodiment of the Khalsa. The Khalsa is a part and parcel of my body; the Khalsa is my very soul."For a Sikh the fact that the Guru has instructed the Sikhs to wear the 5 Ks is an entirely sufficient reason, and no more need be said.The symbols have become more powerful with each passing year of Sikh history. Every Sikh remembers that every Sikh warrior, saint, or martyr since 1699, and every living member of the Khalsa, is united with them in having adopted the same 5 Ks. In the end lets all chant together: □

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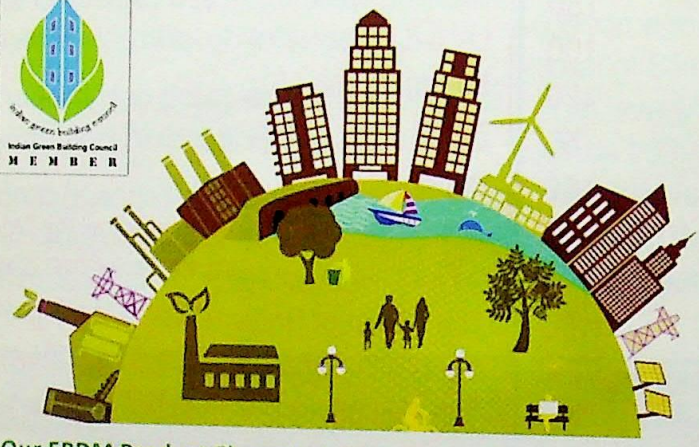
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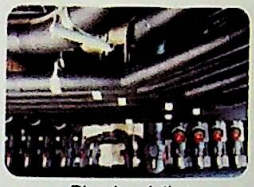
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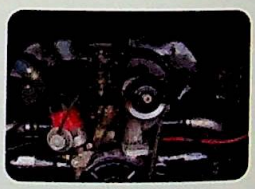
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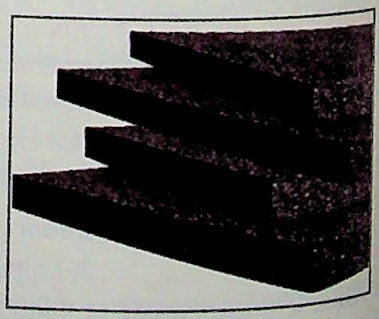
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Sri Guru Gobind Singh- Savior Of Human Rights
(Manas Ki Jaat Sabe Eke Pahichaanbo)

*Dr. (Maj) Balbir Singh Bhasin**

The expression 'apostle' originally comes from the Greek language which derived from a verb 'apostolo.' In secular usage, it was used for 'a person sent on a specific assignment or mission.' This qualification of an apostle applies to Sri Guru Gobind Singh Jee without any doubt, because according to the testimony in Bachitra Nataka, the divine Ultimate Reality (Akal Purakh), has sent or given a call to Guruji to spread dharma (righteousness) in the world. In a chaupai, this is stated as follows:

I have established you as my son and have created you to spread dharma.

Go from this place to that one,

Move the cycle of dharma and stop people from committing evil deeds.

After relating about His 'divine call,' Guruji also stated the objective of his coming into this world. We have Guruji's mission statement in Bachitra Nataka. The English translation of his mission statement read as:

The Objective of my coming to this world is dharma, and the Guru (Lord) has sent me for this purpose. Spread religion everywhere and throw down the knives.

For this very purpose, I have taken birth O Saints, this much you should understand well. I am born to spread religion, emancipate the saints and to wipe out the whole lot of wicked ones.

It inspired, Sri Guru Gobind Ji to work relentlessly for his mission, in fact, his vision of the 'Universal Humanhood.' This vision of the unity of all human beings or humanity was common to all the Ten Gurus. For example, in Japji Sahib, Guru Nanak Dev Ji had declared that before God all are equal:

Saith Nanak: All before him are alike-
None high or low

Guruji's vision of the 'Universal Humanhood' is rooted in His vision of Akal Purakh about whom he said in the opening the Chhapai Chand of Japji:

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You have no specific physical appearance, nor do you have any varna, caste or sub-caste. Nobody can describe your features, complexion, your outlines, or your garb.

(Courtesy: Keynote address delivered at Sri Guru Gobind Singh College of Commerce, Delhi University by Prof. Dr. (Habil) James Massey)

Guru Gobind Singh, the Tenth and the last Guru of Sikhs, has a shining place in the galaxy of the great heroes of humanity. He maintains a very high and respectable position in the history of India, for he changed the course of events and set up a new religious philosophy, required to guide the destinies of the people. His multifaceted personality sets an ideal of perfection in each one of its aspects. His versatile genius always achieved the best in every sphere.

His life was full of struggle and strife, yet noble and inspiring. To be known a great military genius, is not known a history apart from him. But this is not all. He was much more besides an outstanding social reformer, a profound scholar, a prodigious linguist, a great organizer and above all a nation builder. He believed and advocated the golden principle of ***"MANAS KI JAT SABE EKE PAHICHAANBO."***

Not only this much, when his father, Guru Teg Bahadur, from inside the prison, sent him a verse to test his mind viz.

"The strength is gone, shackles have been put on.

And the things are beyond all remedy."

Please note that the reply was given by Guru Gobind Singh Ji in the slok:

ਬਲੁ ਹੋਆ ਬੰਧਨ ਛੁਟੇ ਸਭੁ ਕਿਛੁ ਹੋਤ ਉਪਾਇ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਭੁ ਕਿਛੁ ਤੁਮਰੈ ਹਾਥ ਮੈ ਤੁਮ ਹੀ ਹੋਤ ਸਹਾਇ ॥੫੪॥

"Strength has come, and shackles have shattered, every remedy is possible.

Sayeth Nanak, Oh God, everything is in Thy hands and Thou to help."

Further, when Bhai Jiwan Singh brought him the head of his father, after he was martyred, and narrated to him what difficulties he had to encounter and how he had to hide for the job, the boy Gobind Rai remarked. "Well I shall now see that my followers are not able to hide, and they will do their work openly, and undauntedly they will do or die."

This speaks of honesty, courage, boldness, and sincerity of purpose that was motivating the Guru from the very beginning. In this respect, the Guru stands unique.

Guru Gobind Singh's life mission was to lift up the humanity. He felt that the system of caste and creed untouchability, superstition, gods and goddesses, cowardice, selfishness and voice and physical inability and indignity of women

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folk had destroyed the society. This coupled with the tyranny, injustice, and persecution of Hindus and their myriad other hardships, had made the Hindu life extremely miserable. The Guru then organized his followers into Khalsa, gave them the sword, served them the Amrit, Sweetwater of life, made them real Brethren and ordered them to stand foursquare against social injustices and rules of tyranny, with the motto of "do or die."

The saint-soldier had a keen interest in literature and was surrounded by men with literary bent of mind. His poetry and verses have an extraordinary force. The style even is marital. Read his "Vani," and you will find him a great scholar. He along with his men, produced a lot of literature. This literature portrays him as a man of God. His dealings with other show him as a man of great intelligence, vision and sympathy. His compliments to his own man, Bhai Ghannaiya, who served water on the battlefield even to the enemy, are very touching. Guru Gobind Singh gave an ointment (Malham) to Bhai Ghannaiya to apply on the wounds of Soldiers- irrespective of their caste, religion, and faith.

Guru Gobind Singh was the tenth and the last Guru of the Sikhs and sat on Guru di Gadi at the age of nine and for the next 33 years consolidated the military power of the Sikhs, leading them against the Moghal kings, Hill Kings (Tyrant Hindu kings) with considerable success. In fact, most of the visible aspects of the Sikh community today owe their origin to Guru Gobind Singh.

Guruji Vision of Universal Humanhood and crusader of Human Rights:-

After the martyrdom of the Ninth Guruji as the rate of forced conversion increased, it became imperative for the Tenth Guruji to do something concrete to stop from committing extreme atrocities. To meet such a huge challenge an inclusive, astute and uncompromising ideology was needed, based on which a united force could be raised. With this in mind, he introduced the idea of Dharma Yudh (a battle of life, of ideas, righteousness, justice, and truth), which would draw even those who belong to other faiths including Hinduism and Islam. In the writings of Dasam Granth, we encounter this clear vision of his about Dharam Yudh that is both resolute and universal in its approach.

It should not be considered an exaggeration if I write here that throughout the annals of human history, there was no other human being who could be of a more inspiring personality than Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh. At its climax, the Tenth

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Nanak infused the spirit of both the sainthood and the undauntedness in the minds and hearts of his followers to fight oppression to restore justice, Dharma and to uplift the down-trodden people in this world.

Equality for all citizens is one of India's primary social objectives. And respect for women is something most of us badly need to cultivate and practice, in a society that has seen women burnt for the sake of material benefits. The Guru's teachings, therefore, are of special significance in today's world. The five symbols associated with the Khalsa discipline have a deep relevance. Like ancient sages or Kshatriyas (warriors), the Khalsa grew their hair as a pledge of dedication. While this injunction – not to cut hair – was to give them an identity, the other symbols had deeper meaning. A steel bracelet to denote the universality of God, a comb to keep the hair clean as cleanliness is next to Godliness, underwear to denote chastity and a steel dagger for self-defence. Administering Amrit or nectar to his five disciples and to himself, the Guru is said to had declared: "The Khalsa shall not only be warlike but shall also sweeten the lives of those he is chosen to serve." Calling the Khalsa the 'pure' and his very own, he formalized entity to the concept of the 'warrior saint'. However, Guru Gobind Singh advocated the use of force only if it were absolutely essential and that too, for a good cause. Guru Gobind Singh's message was that physical prowess was as sacred as spiritual sensitivity and both had a significant role in our lives.

In the end, I want to emphasize only this. The Apostle of Universal Humanhood, Sri Guru Gobind Sing ji gave us messages and challenges through his vision and mission, which he has embodied in 'the Khalsa.' They were for the establishment of 'Universal Humanhood. They are very much relevant even today and can make 'another world possible' for us- as against the forces of evils. The evil forces want to establish 'unipolar world order' by controlling the economic, cultural and political powers by using their modern militarism. We must be willing to work towards that end by taking one another as equal partners. The best example for this can be seen in Bhai Kanhaiya's model role. When asked, why he was offering drinking water to the wounded soldiers of the enemy, he replied to Guruji "I always remembered your message. I am doing according to that only. In all the living beings which include 'friends' or 'enemies,' I see my Guru's face everywhere, Bhai Kanhaiya continued to say. □

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So Help Me Waheguru, Allah, God, Yahweh El Al ...

"ਕਿਰਤਮ ਨਾਮ ਕਥੇ ਤੇਰੇ ਜਿਹਬਾ ॥ ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਤੇਰਾ ਪਰਾ ਪੂਰਬਲਾ ॥"

*I.J. Singh (New York)**

Today I come to you with a very different issue but one that periodically shatters our peace in the virtual world of **Internet,** or more crudely at times in the real world in which we live.

The Gurmat – Sikh - teaching repeatedly reminds us to constantly remember One God, the Sole Creator, and that all other actions in life are transient and serve no purpose. I suppose that's not to be literally understood to mean that we quit our jobs and meditate on the Creator 24/7. To me it means that the awareness of a Creator would be the foundational and definitional concept driving all life and all actions.

Most Sikhs seem pretty much agreed on these basics. What divides us – and often passionately so -- is what name to ascribe to the Creator. What to call him in our worship? I suppose this is important; we can't really address the Creator by a hearty "Hey You." After all the Jews have Yahweh or haShem, Christians think of God and Jesus as the Father and son, Muslims worship Allah, but Hindus have a myriad names with just as many definable and recognizable entities that collectively mean the Creator. Sometimes in our passion the love of God turns to the flashing point of anger. For instance in Malaysia a new law decreed that the name Allah may only be used by Muslims; its use by non-Muslims was decreed a crime. (I don't really know how methodically that law is pursued or is it like so many statutes in every society that have existed for generations and are rarely, if ever, enforced.

The danger of conflict that is seen in the 'fragmented identity' of the Creator is obvious and the history of human civilization bears ample and bloody testimony of it. Believe me I am not attempting to deconstruct the Creator -- so help me Yahweh, Allah, Vaheguru, God, et al!

How many names exist for the Creator? Of course, I went to Google and then quickly gave up. The list is endless and the task prohibitive. Guru Gobind Singh Ji recites hundreds of Holy Name in Jaap Sahib.

Among Sikhs the verbal battleground that I see on the **Internet** usually runs around the idea that the most commonly used for the Creator is "Vaheguru." Its origin and usage have a contentious history like most ancient practices and matters in any religion. It is not a word coined by any of the Ten Gurus. So, one can safely assume that it was not in wide usage and circulation at that time.

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I should add an aside here that in the Gurmukhi alphabet there is only one phoneme for the sound of "v" or "w" and the two sounds are not distinguishable from each other. Gurmukhi itself is a perfectly phonetic language whereas English is not and has a chaotic history to its structure. Regional differences in enunciation and recording exist when transcribing Gurmukhi into Roman script. So is it Vaheguru or Waheguru? This is pretty much a matter of personal choice and no rule exists to govern this usage."

The late Hew McLeod suggested this and recently - in a well documented essay - Dalvinder Singh Grewal points out that Guru Amardas used the words "Vahu" (Guru Granth p.515) and "Guru" repeatedly, but never in the combined form as "Vaheguru." Of course one author in the Guru Granth -- the Bhatt Giand – has used "Vaheguru" in the combined form (p 1402-3). Some scholars assert that this usage was not for the name of the Creator but in appreciation of Guru Ramdas. Of course, in the Guru Granth, a myriad examples exist of using "Gur or Guru" to indicate the Creator.

Some people believe that the popularization of the word Vaheguru in Sikhism stems from the writings of Kapur Singh but that seems grossly incorrect. Kapur Singh was a man of the 20th century. The word Vaheguru existed earlier and was used by a scholar no less than Bhai Gurdas (in Vaar 24 & 40), a contemporary of the Gurus and scribe of the first copy of the Aadi Granth, whose writings are revered in Sikh tradition and often honored as the key to the Guru Granth.

History suggests that in at least one Hukumnama Guru Gobind Singh used the word Vaheguru; he also said to have used it in his last greeting to the Sikhs. Mata Sahib Devan apparently used the appellation Vaheguru in her Hukumnamas as well. There are other copious references to 18th and 19th century literature where the term Vaheguru has been used.

I leave it to historians to quibble over exactly when, by whom and under what circumstances these events occurred.

But all this does not necessarily mean that any Guru prescribed or mandated the use of Vaheguru in Sikh worship or religious service. Why? This is the all important question here.

Let us Look up the Guru Granth Sahib: In how many different ways is the Creator referred to and why? If every people and their religion speaks in a specific language and cultural context there are bound to be an endless names for an endless entity that is the Creator.

Guru Granth Sahib speaks of the many Muslim names for an infinite Creator: Allah, Rahim Karim, Khuda... and so on. Hindu names of God are even more prevalent: Ram, Gopal, Thakur, Bekuntth, Prabhu, Ishvar, Bhagvan, Vishnu, and Shiva ... a really endless list. And then look at the Jaap sahib, a composition by Guru Gobind Singh that's not included in the Guru Granth by the choice of the Guru but is read every day by practicing Sikhs. It seems to be a listing -- a catalogue -- of the many

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names and endless attributes of the Creator. Someone counted the many attributive names of the Creator and the number turns to be an impressive 950. To my mind, the process is a confession of the fact that a finite language and our limited human imagination can never fully capture the reality of an Infinite Creator.

The moral here seems to be not that it is healthier, more respectful, or more acceptable to remember the Creator by a specific name but that it is essential to cultivate a relationship with the Infinite. What language, what name or what ritual we use to discipline our minds is just so trivial a matter.

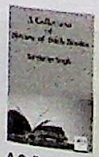
But then it is not always a trivial matter. Why? The human mind is fickle. A discipline of practice is essential to a life. Hence the religious traditions and worship. But what if the words of the congregants do not match? One cannot really have a useful practice if in a congregation one prefers to sing or dance his or her prayer, another to close his/her eyes to the world and merge in silence, while a third needs a celebratory bash. Yet each of these extreme variations exists and there is a place for each in God's green acre.

The word Vaheguru seems to have evolved from the Sikh community's needs for a common culture, lexicon and practice. And that sanctifies it more than any other reason.

The idea is to find the Creator in the self; discover and nurture this universal connectivity. They help us create a community and a sacred fellowship. ❑


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O Canada! Our Canada

*Guru Fatha Singh Khalsa**

As Sikhs of the Guru, we find ourselves multiply blessed. Wherever we might be, Guru Nanak Dev Ji showers blessings of infinite variety, more than we can estimate. Some blessings are relatively mundane – mild weather, a great work opportunity, a new car. Others are uncanny and leave us wondering.

As a Canadian, I have heard many times now how great it is that MP Lt. Col. Harjit Sajjan "has become the first Amritdhari Sikh to hold the position of Minister of Defence in a Cabinet since the Sikh Empire." [www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sikhism_in_Canada] It is truly wonderful that a turbaned and bearded Sikh should be chosen for such a responsibility. DhanGuru Nanak!

What I have not heard from any quarter is any hint of curiosity as to how this came to pass. Should we just take for granted that Canada has always been a place of enlightened Cabinet selections? Is Canada a natural superstar in the constellation of nations, a place of cultural diversity without prejudice?

No, this is not our Canada.

Those who live here know that this country is today in the midst of an effort at conciliation with its 1.4 million Indigenous peoples, who have been cheated of their lands and oppressed for hundreds of years by European settlers [Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada website: https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1400782178444/1400782270488]. Lt. Col. Sajjan's Vancouver is itself home to the infamous saga of the KomagataMaru, whose 352 Sikh, Muslim and Hindu passengers sailing from Kolkata (Calcutta) in 1914, were not allowed by the government to disembark, but forced to return to India. At that time, British Columbia (B.C.), the large, westerly Canadian province of which Vancouver is the largest city, took away the immigration rights of Asians together with their right to vote.

So, Canada does not have an unblemished history as a liberal democracy. Having taken over this great land from its original inhabitants, Europeans feared themselves being overwhelmed by a wave of immigration from China, Japan and India, so they put up legal barriers. Those barriers and associated prejudice endured for generations.

Something must have happened to temper the blatant racism and xenophobia

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rampant in Canada, forces I myself have seen to still exist in a milder form in rural Canada, and in England and Germany.

This article is my humble perspective of how Canada became the blessed place it is today.

Some of the credit for Canada's transformation from a racist, colonial backwater goes to Pierre Elliot Trudeau, its 15th Prime Minister (1968-79, 1980-84). Trudeau studied at some of the best universities (Harvard, Sorbonne, London School of Economics). As a young man, he trekked through the Middle East, India, and China. A funny thing: a striking photo of Trudeau during his adventure, published in his biographies, shows him with his beard grown out and hair under a respectable turban, looking like a regular Sikh [Sara Borins, Trudeau Albums, Toronto, ON: Penguin Books, 2000, 33]. Trudeau, father of Canada's present Prime Minister, translated his cosmopolitan views into modern, inclusive policies - including multiculturalism and the encouragement of immigration from non-European countries.

Credit also goes to the hardiness and work ethic of immigrant Sikhs which made an impression everywhere they went. Author, Kamala Elizabeth Nayar describes in some detail their situation in B.C, where they first arrived in the late 1890s. She also depicts their efforts at sharing their culture in multi-cultural and sports events. Networking extended to unions and established political parties. [Kamala Elizabeth Nayar, The Sikh Diaspora in Vancouver, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004; Kamala Elizabeth Nayar, The Punjabis in British Columbia, Montreal QC & Kingston ON, 2012].

Sikhs did not arrive in Ontario until the early 1950s. Today, there are about 179,000 Sikhs in Ontario compared with B.C.'s 201,000, so this describes a huge burst of population in Canada's heartland.

As it happens, Ontario's major cities of Toronto and Ottawa were then, and continue to be, blessed with a generally liberal ambiance. There were several universities and a number of newspapers, particularly the Toronto Star and the Globe and Mail, expressing a generous and thoughtful perspective. By the early 70s, the Sikh community in Ontario was still small, numbering less than 500, but some were educated, who were not reluctant to press for their rights. In 1974, the Toronto Transit Commission was persuaded to allow Sikh drivers to retain their beards and turbans.

Toronto also happened to be the Canadian bridgehead for the Healthy, Happy, Holy Organization (3HO) founded by Siri Singh Sahib Harbhajan Singh Khalsa Yogiji (Yogi Bhajan). Started in 1970, the community was engaged in a constant campaign of challenging conventional thinking just by their existence as "White Sikhs." By developing relationships with the media, the local Sikhleader, Gurutej Singh

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ensured an on-going stream of print coverage. Any why not? Yogi Bhajan's students, the new Sikhs, raised all kinds of societal questions. Why did they become Sikhs? What was their critique of mainstream culture, anyway? It did not hurt that media guru, Marshall McLuhan's son, Michael was for a time an avid companion of the group.

Papers, large and small, were soon educating their curious Caucasian readers (Ottawa and Toronto were overwhelmingly "pale-faced" in those days) with such articles as "Spiritual Revolution" [Caitlin Kelly, The Varsity, October 8, 1975, 6-7], "He gave up materialism for meditation" [Helen Worthington, Toronto Star, November 14, 1975, E1], "Misfits of society turn to Sikhism," [Sylvia Stead, Globe and Mail, August 9, 1975, 44], "Sikh way of life: Cold shower and meditation at 3:30 a.m." [Sheila Ashcroft, Ottawa Citizen, October 14, 1975, 71]. The most widely read article of all was published in the national magazine, Maclean's on April 19, 1977. Hubert de Santa's "Healthy, Happy, Holy – and collectively wealthy and individually lethal" described the fastidious lives of the avid, new Sikhs from early rising to yoga and meditation, to reading from Siri Guru Granth Sahib, to work, and martial arts classes in the evening.

When prejudice reared its ugly head in Ontario with the arrival of new immigrants, Yogi Bhajan himself went to bat with the media. In "Sikhs keep ready to battle the bigot – to the bitter end" [Tom Hill, The Citizen, February 8, 1977, 33] the Siri Singh Sahib, students at his side, divulged, "It is not in our tradition to surrender." Like our Punjabi sisters and brothers, we homegrown Sikhs also took on ignorance and bigotry. The media was happy to cover our escapades. "Turbaned Sikh wins right to be soldier" [Ron Lowman, Toronto Star, March 28, 1979] describes how EkOngKar Singh Khalsa forced the Department of National Defence to bow to pressure from the Canadian Human Rights Commission to allow him to serve in a Toronto militia. "Razor Wars: Sikh blunts cutting edge of firm's clean-shaven rule" [Dennis Robinson, Globe and Mail, May 10, 1980, 5] describes how another new Sikh successfully challenged a taxi company's "no beards" rule at the Ontario Human Rights Commission.

There was a sweet irony in these cases. Not long before, we had been hippies. As flower children in our long hair and hippy clothes, we had challenged repressive social norms with our body politic, always risking arrest and a hair cut in jail for some minor misdemeanour. Now, with our hair in turbans, we challenged that same closed-minded authority and came away victorious by Guru Nanak's grace.

It is my view that because of our unique situation, we new Sikhs were able to flip what might have been a case of cultural

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dissonance on its head.Whenever we came before a tribunal or a reporter, everyone involved knew intuitively that what was being argued was not actually the comparative merits of competing rights. We were arguing the irrefutable logic of the spiritual life coined by Guru Nanak: healthy, happy and holy.

Then, in the 1980s, from a media point of view, we Sikhs lost our innocence. Tarred with the brush of "terrorism," we learned who our true friends were. Mostly, the mainstream media was no longer with us, but when a particularly nasty act of defamation was published in a national magazine (Ian Mulgrew, "The Sikhs in Canada," Saturday Night, January 1988, 21-30), the resulting letters from Sikhs new and old, and from other Canadians were unanimous in condemning the article ("Very Clever, Mr. Mulgrew," Saturday Night, April 1988, 5-6).

Over time, the real story of another Ghallughara in Punjab, in Delhi, in Kanpur, began to come out. Books like Soft Target (1989) and movies like Amu (2005)helped to shift the blameand the balance.

In the 1990s, Tapisher Singh launched a weekly television program "Insight into Sikhism" on one of the dedicated multicultural channels in Toronto. Taken up a few years later by Hari Nam Singh Khalsa, the popular program showcases many aspects of Sikh faith and practice to an English-speaking audience.

The election of Gurbax Singh Malhi as the first turbaned Sikh MP in 1993 opened a new chapter in Sikh:Canadian relations. The subsequent election of UjjalDosanjh as Premier of B.C. in 2000 demonstrated both the effectiveness of Sikh political organization and the electability of Sikhs to high political office.

In the field of art and antiquities, in 2000, an exhibition of relics from the kingdom of Maharaja Ranjeet Singh showcased the splendour of the Sikh artistic heritage at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto. Haroon Siddiqui, editor emeritus of the city's largest paper,marked the occasion with a touching elegy to Sikhs ["A great tribute to a great people," Toronto Star, May 18, 2000 http://sikhfoundationcanada.com/images/torontostar.pdf].

Harnarayan Singh is known across the country for his avid play-by-play announcing in Punjabi of ice hockey games, Canada's national pastime [ShandaDeziel, "Bonino! Bonino! Bonino! How a hockey man found his calling," Macleans, April 9, 2016, http://www.macleans.ca/culture/television/how-harnarayan-singh-found-his-calling/]. Practically synonymous with the Toronto Raptors professional basketball club, Nav Bhatia actively uses the sport to promote intercultural respect and understanding. Cheering on the team from his courtside seat, and touring with them during the playoffs, Bhatia also buys 3,000

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tickets to give to Sikh youth each year on Diwali and Baisakhi [Donnovan Bennett, "How Raptors SuperfanNav Bhatia used sports to acclimate to Canada," Sportsnet, June 2, 2017 http://www.sportsnet.ca/basketball/nba/raptors-superfan-nav-bhatia-used-sports-acclimate-canada/].

While Kamal Nayar describes the perceived hostile attitude of Vancouver media toward Sikhs, the Toronto Star – managed according to a set of altruistic principles -has been effusive in its support, particularly during Baiskahi celebrations. Though other media may limit their coverage of the massive annual Nagar Keertan parade to city hall, the Star each year does an inspiring article embellished with big, colour photos. And the mainstream media still publish occasional, though increasingly rare, articles about new Sikhs [Sylvia Fraser, "Hari Nam Singh Khalsa... a nice Jewish boy," Toronto Life, July 1998, 55-67; RaheelRaza, "White by birth, Sikh by Choice," Toronto Star, April 11, 2009, G5 https://www.thestar.com/life/2009/04/11/white_by_birth_sikh_by_choice.html].

Much media focus today is on Canadian Sikhs in the political sphere. More recent than MP Lt. Col. Harjit Sajjan's becoming Defense Minister, has been the appointment of Palbinder Kaur Shergill as the first turbaned judge of Canada's Supreme Court [Lien Yeung, "Sikhs celebrate B.C. woman's 'inspiring' appointment as first turbaned judge in Canada," CBC News, June 24, 2017 http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/palbinder-kaur-shergill-appointed-to-supreme-court-british-columbia-1.4176952]. Moreover, Harjit Sajjan is not the only Sikh in the federal Cabinet. The others are: Navdeep Singh Bains (Innovation, Science and Economic Development), BardishChagger (Small Business and Tourism, Leader of the Government in the House of Commons), and AmarjeetSohi (Infrastructure and Communities). The Cabinet of PM Justin Trudeau (Canada's 23rd Prime Minister) as a whole is an image of diversity and respect. Half are women. It includes an Indigenous Justice Minister (who appointed Shergill), two Muslims (one born in Iran and one in Somalia), a quadriplegic Member and a Member who is visually impaired [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cabinet_of_Canada].

To add another element of amazement to the mix, the country's social democratic party, the NDP is currently having a leadership race and among the four contenders is Jagmeet Singh, the turbaned and photogenic, former deputy leader of the Ontario wing of the party, whom some consider the candidate to beat [Lee Berthiaume, "Jagmeet Singh target of pointed attacks at latest NDP leadership debate," The Star, June 11, 2017 https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2017/06/11/jagmeet-singh-target-of-pointed-attacks-at-latest-ndp-leadership-debate.html].

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Enough said. Canada today is generally a great country to live in as a Sikh. But it could have turned out otherwise. Canada has a history of racism. The 1970s were marked by anti-Indian racism and during the 1980s, Sikhs carried much the same stigma attached to Muslims today, thanks to a concerted effort to defame the community. Somehow, things turned out for the best. We have Guru Nanak Dev ji to thank for this outcome.

There may be lessons for other minority communities to be learned from our experience in Canada. Here is a short list:

1) Work hard and honestly.

2) Find, create, and take advantage of opportunities to share the best of your culture and religion.

3) Befriend the locals. Learn the language and culture. Don't live in a social ghetto.

4) Where possible, be a role model.

5) Don't be afraid to "own" the culture. Be a basketball "fanatic." Get "obsessed" with ice hockey (or the local equivalent).

As an early Sikh in Toronto, I know we upended a lot of prejudices and preconceptions, just by being "white." But our allegiance to health, happiness and holiness also struck a cord with many, many people we met and still meet.

Culture is a funny thing, especially when it is not a culture you subscribe to. It can be mean. It can be intimidating. But sometimes also, by Guru's grace you can change that culture.

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- Publisher, ***The Sikh Review***

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Spiritual Emptiness And Problem of Addiction in Youths of Punjab India

*Dr. S.S. Sodhi**

In this article, I will share with your readers the problems of Drug Addiction in the (Sikh) youths of Punjab - A psychosocial-spiritual analysis. The current use of "Blaming the Victim" philosophy by Political Leaders of Punjab to get rid of their subjective guilt feelings will also be examined. I will also discuss the strategies of remediating this drug addiction behaviour.

According to the DSM-IV, the Psychiatric "Bible" of North America, substances that get abused by youths are;

1. Alcohol
2. Amphetamine
3. Cannabis (Marijuana – Sukha – Ganja)
4. Cocaine (Heroine)
5. Hallucigenous – Inhahanto – Tobacco
6. Opiates (Phem)
7. P.C.P
8. Sedatives (Anti-anxiety Prescriptions) and other drugs – (hypnotics)

The above mentioned substances cause in our youths substance related addiction disorders. Sikh youths become substance dependent and need more drugs to achieve a "high".

Withdrawal of the substance causes extreme distress (In Punjabi we call it TODH). TODH sometimes produces suicidal behaviour and get reduced to "guiltless", "irresponsible", "lazy", "self-indulging", "hedonistic" and "lacking in will power". Their addiction becomes a psychological necessity, a compulsion to reduce the craving at any cost. Drug dependency is a learnt behaviour which may have some genetic components.

It is a learnt way of coping with spiritual emptiness, deep sealed alientation from sat guru, resentment to authority, flagrant selfishness, desire for immediate gratification – a reflection of irrational attitudes towards life and spirituality. Spiritually speaking, drug dependency is a sign of a persons alienation from a higher power – sat guru. A rift or resentment is formed between drug addicts and his

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personal God – sat guru. Only by over coming this rift and becoming congruent with his "divine ground" – sat guru – his *hukam parsad*, the healing takes place with his grace (*nadar*).

There are paradises and contradictions in the understanding of Drug Addiction behaviour of our youths. Addiction resides in the brain (mind) of the youths which makes them powerless and hopeless. They reach a de-realized, spiritually empty stage of existence in a meaningless depersonalized life.

Youths brain (mind) starts legitimizing and rationalizing his addictions, so that he does not have to feel guilty. Family and culture start blaming the victims (see William Ryan – Blaming THE Victim 1972). The present Punjabi culture is the culture of Victim Blames (Priest, Politicians, and Medical Establishments). It helps them to deflect the subjective guilt they should be experiencing about "the conditions, the society" of Punjab he has created. It has made the youths powerless and has left them alienated from their spiritual existence. In this the politicians who use Gurdwara money to win elections rather than spending it on educating youth welfare, is a case in point. By using the paradigm of "Blaming the Victims" they are able to deflect the guilt of not doing what they are supposed to do.

For helping the addicts, one has to understand the Mind of Addict. These addicts start writing their own mental scripts, learn them by heart, change them according to the circumstances, dramatize them while judging if the reasons of taking the drugs (father was abusive/my wife does not love me!).

So, drugs are used by Sikh youths to escape, relax, socialize and temporarily improve the self-image. Many addicts feel basic resentment towards their families, culture, Gurus, Religion, and use drugs to numb their brains (mind).

Addictive Personality of Punjabi Youth

Dr. Alan R. Lang, Professor of Psychology at Florida State University U.S.A. states that Addictive Personality predisposes a person to develop addictions. Parents who make their children dependent (because of the parents own needs) actually may be producing an addictive personality. These children not only use drugs but may be ready to take gambling, food addiction, pornography, video games as addictive behaviours. They also develop co-dependency on their partners when they marry (they become *Biwi Ke Gulams or Mian Mithus*).

The addictive personality (stealing, buying and compulsions with poor impulses) control behaviour.

Remediation

We have to accept that addiction is the disease produced by chemical imbalance in the brain, which may be genetically or

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psycho-socially determined. If the causes are chemical imbalance, mega doses of vitamins B6, B12, B complex and 5HTP, use of such medicines (Antabuse for alcoholism), auto-anxiety medicine, should be tried. It must be stated that treatment must be done under a trained medical practitioner and trained addiction counsellor.

Addicts become vulnerable, helpless and desperately seek guidance and help. At this time, attempts should be made to help him surrender to their personal Guru or Sat Guru. Surrendering to Sat Guru produces in addicts a "critical perceptual shift". He undergoes a rapid spiritual awakening and shifts his addiction from substances to Sat Guru. If his self-surrender is complete, he does not need substances to reach altered states of consciousness. He is already there!! So his addiction – a disease of the brain/soul gets cured spiritually.

Concentric Meditation

Doing KirtanHina or repetition of Matras, Man Sinar for 50 minutes a day has proven to be very effective in curing addiction.

Recovering addicts can be urged to meet their affiliation and socio-spiritual needs by coming to the GurdwaraSchibs and doing Seva in Langar and other volunteering activities.

Positive addictions or substitute indulgences such as reading Gurer Grath Sabih and understanding its meaning, gardening, going for a walk with a friend, visiting holy places (Spending a week or two in Har minder Sabih, listening to Shabads and meditating while sitting and focusing on HARIMADIR SAHIB its Reflection in Water).

Seeking the company of evolved Mystics or Saints, developing faith in Sat Guru should also be tried (It must be stated the Holy Man must be Holy and not cultist ready to exploit an addict's weaknesses).

A commitment to an emotionally and spiritually caring and sharing life has helped many addicts in their recovery.

Repetition of SERENITY prayer such as;

GOD (SAT GURU) GRANT ME THE SERENITY TO ACCEPT THE THINGS I CAN'T CHANGE, THE COURAGE TO CHANGE THE THINGS I CAN; AND WISDOM TO KNOW THE DIFFERENCE.

This prayer has done wonders in changing the cognition of addicts.

It is the belief of the present author that by making Addicts spiritual, a good addiction therapist guide, as a caring Guru (Holy Man – NOT Cultist) can awaken INNER WISDOM in addicts (Sikh Youth). They then do not need drugs to seek a "high". They are already there because of HIS HUKAM, Grace and NADER. ❑

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Guru Gobind Singh Ji

*PROF. PURAN SINGH**

"They ask me to say something about Guru Gobind Singh;
they ask what is He to me?
I tremble when they ask me, what is He to me?
Unable to say anything in reply,
I burst forth into childlike cries of both joy and pain,
and I faint away,
knowing not what is He to me!
Only I say Guru Glorious! Guru Glorious and I am consoled,
I slumber in His Lap,
soothed by the lullabies of my own sound,
knowing not what is He to me!
Do not ask me to define Him,
Do not ask me to praise Him,
Do not ask me name Him,
Do not ask me to preach Him,
And ask me not to conceal Him,
One who has freed me,-
Me, the self-poisoned,
the downtrodden slave in the fragrance of Himself.
Whatever He may be to anyone else,
To me, He is the Creator,
who has cast Himself in the shape of His Song.
And sitting nowhere,
He showers from his eyes a rain of stars in the sky!
Let the Great Ones name Him,
Let the scholars search Him
Let the learned discourse on Him,
Let the martyrs sing Him,
Let the lovers call Him,
Let the maidens garland Him,
and sing Him a welcome!
Let the saints worship Him,
let the devotees kiss the Hem of His Garment,
and anoint their foreheads with the dust under His feet,
Let the children gather round Him,
Whatever He may be to anyone else,
To me He is my sacred friend,
who comes unseen to me in my dark despair,
to wipe a silent tear with the edge of His Kingly Skirt.

*Courtesy: Sikh24.com

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And to say to me when I cannot listen even to Him,

choked with my own tears,-

"I am here by your side, the whole of myself when no one is nigh,

I am for you, O sad sinner!

I am exclusively for you and no one else!!"

Let the women say to Him, "I love you,"

let the singer say to Him, "I sing for you,"

Let the dancer say to Him, "I dance for you,"

Let the yogi say to Him, "I lie wrapped up in thought of you,"

Let the pious tell Him, "we obey your law,"

Whatever He may be to anyone else and anybody else to Him,

What can I be?-

I, devoid of all virtue, merit, or light;

I devoid of the sacred vows of piety, silence or poverty;

I a sweeper of the street of the Pleasure of Sense;

I, an aimless chaser of quivering Illusions that fly the trembling colors of the wings of the butterflies that flutter around the Maya of life in full flowers:

What can I, I say to Him?-

I, the old joy-sipper with the everlasting burden of Illusion on my back:

I only cast my head down in shame,

I stand abashed, away from all,

in the corner of my naked body with all its scars and stains;

But behold: He cometh even to me, as the sun goes down,

and the saints leave Him alone.

And as He cometh, I burst forth crying.

And He consoleth me saying: 'Have I been really too long away from thee?'"

-Professor Puran Singh

Free Matrimonial Advertisement

In view of the global readership "The Sikh Review" is going to publish Matrimonial Column in their up-coming editions to extend co-operation to Gursikh families - living across the world – In search for a suitable Gursikh Match for their grown up children.

Interested parents can send their brief matter to us,

– Publisher

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Odysseys of Guru Nanak

Dear S. Saran Singh Ji,

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh;

I am hoping that you are in great health and spirits.

Greetings on the Parkash Purab of Guru Nanak Dev Ji. I received the October issue of your esteemed journal and saw the picture of Panja Sahib Gurudwara on the cover.

The cover triggered a thought process and this resulted in putting this piece together on Guru Ji's visit to two places one in the south and other in the north. I am also including images of the place to go with article.

I hope you will find article interesting and worthy of sharing with your readers in your esteemed journal and visitors to website.

Yours

Sr. Bhupinder Singh
Email: singhbo@gmail.com

Dear Vir Bhupinder Singh Ji,

Waheguru JI Ka Khalsa Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh!

Many thanks for mail dated Dec 13, 2017 and the imaginative Essay: "**Bidar to Hasan Abdal**"

You have rightly reacted to the enchanting travels of Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji. I have visited both the Gurdwaras;. It is heavenly experience! We All have travelled the Earth, end to end, but our heads bow in deep reverence for the illustries Satguru's humane and utterly dedicated mission spanning All Asia - & beyond.

The Sikh Nation owes an enormous Debt of Gratitude to All our Ten Gurus for our Nation's Dynamics.

Yours Truly,
Sr. Saran Singh
***Ed*-The Sikh Review**

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Historic Meeting of Jathedar Akal Takht and the Pope

Dear Sir,

Historically there has been only one meeting of Jathedar Sri Akal Takht with head of the catholic church. His Holiness the Pope. This was on 22nd Feb. 2002, in Vatican. Singh Sahib Giani Joginder Singh Vidanti – the Jathedar of Akal Takht. He had been invited to attend the Peace conference organized by the Vatican at Asisi (Italy) where all religious heads were invited by the Pope. The then Jathedar was seated on the dias with the Pope along with five other religious heads.

Since I have been involved in organising this meeting. I want to share the information with the Sikhs across the world. Pope John Paul visited India in 1985. He was invited to Rashtarpati Bhawan where he had meeting with (The Late) Giani Zail Singh. I had been then working as Press Secretary to the President. In Delhi the Pope went around to see the Rashtrapati Bhavan. When he

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saw an impressive model of the Golden Temple Model, he showed curiosity and asked many questions. From that time I came very close to the Vatican embassy which is called "Apostolic Nuncio". My contact with the Vatican became closer when I became Vice Chairman of the National Commission for Minorities in 2000. When a Peace Conference was announced in 2001. I was invited to attend as representative of the Sikhs. I immediately informed the Ambassador, as well as the Vatican, to send invitation to Jathedar Akal Takht. That's how this visit took place. I also got permission from the Vatican that Jathedar Akal Takht will carry three feet long Kripan!

Sr. Tarlochan Singh,
Ex - MP (Rajya Sabha)
Email:tarlochan@tarlochansingh.com

★★★★★★

"Guru and the Pir"

Sir,

Bharat and Madhu Dogra's article, '**A massage for our troubled times'** (4 November - The Statesman, Calcutta) is timely. Guru Nanak was born on the auspicious Raash Purnima day in 1469. Gurus are messengers of God. They are the light-bearers, not founders of any doctrine. They renew the eternal wisdom of mankind, to free humanity from the evils of fanaticism, superstition, and intolerance. Such attitude pained Nanak no end. To him we owe the *Jap Sahib* or the morning prayer. He could enlighten the people with simple examples. Thus did he become a mass educator. To the Hindus he was revered as a guru. To the Muslims he was a Pir. His followers used to chant ***Guru Nanak Shah Fakir/Hindu ka guru, Musalman ka Pir.*** He passed away in 1539. Nanak's followers faced problems, however. Most particularly, the ninth Guru Tegh Bahadur who had protested against certain measures of Emperor Aurangzeb. The Mughul was so infuriated that he forced Guru Tegh Bahadur to either convert to Islam or face death. Guru Tegh Tegh Bahadur preferred death to sacrificing his faith – '*sirr diya purr sirrar na diya*'. His four sons also sacrificed their lives. Guru Govind, the tenth and last guru, converted young disciples (*Sisyas* Sikhs) to a semi-military brotherhood in order to protect them- selves and their faith. On the new year day of 1669 Guru Gobind initiated five of his followers into a new fraternity called the Khalsa (pure). Of these five, one was a Brahmin, one a kshatriya and the rest belonged to the lower castes. He thus under-lined the importance of social equality. They all drank out of the same bowl and were given new names with the suffix Singh (lion). They resolved to carry the five Ks- *kes, kangha, kripan, kancha and kara* – and vowed not to show their backs to the foe in battle.

Yours,
Susant Kumar Ghose,
Kolkata

[Note: The above article of Bharat and Madhu Dogra had also been published in November 2017 issue of TSR]

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'A WELCOME ANNOUCEMENT' for esteemed readers of "The Sikh Review"

In view of the steadily rising readership of "The Sikh Review", there has been a persistent demand by our valuable Members / Contributors for the launching of an upgraded website that can provide Member Subscribers, Contributors, in particular, and the Web visitors (non-member) in general, with all kinds of information pertaining to the scholarly articles on Sikhism published in "The Sikh Review", and also guide them "How to become a Member Subscriber of the Journal".

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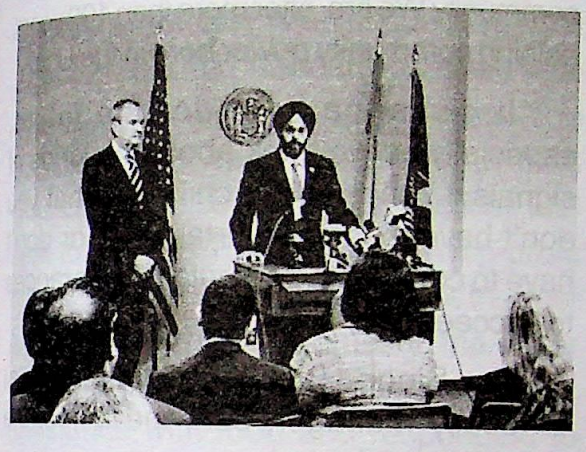
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Gurbir Singh Grewal would be the "First Sikh Attorney General" in New Jersey (USA)



Bergen County Prosecutor Gurbir Singh Grewal was announced as Gov.-elect Phil Murphy's choice for attorney general on 12th December 2017.

Grewal would be the first Sikh to be selected to the position in the state's history, as well as the first Sikh state attorney general in U.S. history.

If confirmed, Grewal would succeed current Attorney General Christopher Porrino.

The news was first reported by Insider NJ on Tuesday morning.

The appointment appears to be in line with Murphy's campaign promise to ensure his administration reflects the demographics of the state, as well as validates a sentiment of a growing South Asian political presence in the state.

When asked why Grewal was chosen, other than being a minority official, one insider, who was not authorized to speak on the record, said he was "eminently qualified."

"He has dedicated his entire career to being a prosecutor and to public service," the insider said. "He's not a politician. He's purely a prosecutorial lawyer."

Hoboken Mayor-elect Ravinder Singh Bhalla, a fellow lawyer and a childhood friend of Grewal, congratulated him on the appointment.

"The governor-elect has picked a highly qualified professional in Grewal," Bhalla told ROI-NJ. "Grewal's qualifications are impeccable. I am happy that the governor-elect decided to appoint someone based on the merits."

Grewal's appointment comes at an appropriate time.

"When you talk about the things going on around the country right now, who is better qualified than a measured prosecutor?" the insider said. "What you see here is Gov.-elect Murphy satisfying his campaign promise that the attorney general would be somebody who is not only a distinguished lawyer, but someone who has personal experience with a lot of issues that the diverse residents of New Jersey face. Having that cultural perspective provides you with vision and foresight to do your job better."

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The comments were echoed by Simran Jeet Singh, a well-known voice advocating on behalf of the Sikh community.

"In this political moment where people are constantly being told by our government and by our fellow Americans that we don't belong ¬ it is incredibly powerful to have leaders step forward who are professionals in their own right, but have a background and understanding of messages of hate," he said.

Singh is an assistant professor in the Department of Religion at Trinity University and senior religion fellow for the Sikh Coalition.

The Sikh Coalition, which advocates for greater awareness of the culture, said it believed Grewal to be the first Sikh state-level attorney general in the country.

"While not a state AG, Preet Bharara was the U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of New York prior to President (Donald) Trump's arrival," a spokesman told ROI-NJ. "Mr. Bharara comes from a Sikh family. We know that there are a few assistant U.S. Attorneys in D.C., Chicago and NYC, but we are not aware of anything else."

In announcing his choice of Grewal later Tuesday, Murphy said he indeed would be the first Sikh to hold such a position.

Singh said it appears that, after more than a century since Sikhs first arrived on the West Coast, the community is finally arriving on the political scene.

"As a historian, I have to point out that Sikhs have been engaged in politics in America for a long time," Singh said. "That being said, this is an inflection point for the Sikh community. We are, after more than 100 years, gaining community power here in the U.S."

"It gives me hope for the future, especially as we think about the kinds of signals it sends to our children. That you don't have to look a certain way or don't have to conform to particular appearances to succeed."

Sim Singh, Sikh Coalition national advocacy manager, said the milestone should be celebrated.

"The appointment of Gurbir Singh Grewal is another landmark moment for the Sikh-American community," he said. "While breaking down barriers for the next generation of Sikh leaders, he is reminding all Americans that diversity is our nation's greatest strength."

Jagpal Singh Tiwana
Dartmouth, Canada

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

American Sikh Council Vice President Jasbir Kaur honored with Local Hero Award

American Sikh Council (ASC) Vice-President Sdn. Jasbir Kaur was honored by 33-ABC WYTV as a 'Hometown Hero' in Youngstown, OH for her sincere effort to help others through community service on November 8, 2017.

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She led and initiated the fund raising drive on behalf of 'ASC' for the hurricane disaster that occurred in Puerto Rico.

The American Sikh Council (ASC) rallied together and the board members were able to raise $3,000 for the victims. The $3,000 check from the American Sikh Council, [the Voice of Sikhs in America], was sent to 'Caritas' Puerto Rico, a non-profit organization in San Juan, that helps the poor and those in need. Some of the other programs that 'Carita' Puerto Rico does is; assistance with food and responding to emergencies and natural disasters.

S.Jasbir Kaur not only brings great passion to her work as a ESL high school teacher in the Youngstown School District, Youngstown, OH but the same passion drives her to selflessly promote the great values of the Sikh Faith across dozens of Gurdwaras across the US repeatedly .

She has regularly done lectures on various topics of the Sikh Faith because she is ardent about explaining the core values of the Sri Guru Granth Sahib to others around her who want to understand and change their own lives for the better.

Jasbir Kaur also continues to lead and teach at Sikh Youth Camps not only in the summer but also in the winter when children are on winter breaks in order to inspire them to follow the Guru's footstep.

There are plenty of male Sikh preachers but it is rare to find an educated and articulate female, that to a really good one who can not only connect with adults, but with women, young girls and be able to explain in Gurmukhi and English, so it really touches the heart.

Jasbir Kaur is a gifted Sikh who can bond with the audience which is rare in this day and age. When grown men are seen in tears, it can really convey that they have been moved and that is a talent which should not be allowed to be frittered away.

★★★★★★

Yuba City Names First Sikh Woman As Mayor



Preet Kaur Didbal, an Indian-American daughter of a labourer who herself 'did the peaches, the prunes', has been named as the first Sikh woman mayor of California's Yuba City.

The appointment also makes her the first Sikh woman mayor in the United States.

Her appointment comes just weeks after fellow Sikh-American, Ravinder Singh Bhalla, won a direct election for the mayor of Hoboken, New Jersey.

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Appointed by the Yuba's city council, Preet Kaur Didbal was sworn in on Dec. 5.

Didbal had received her Bachelors from California State University, Sacramento in 1998 and went on for her Masters in public administration in 2012 from University of San Francisco.

She has spent 19 years as a civil servant, working for the California Correctional Health Care Services.

She was elected to Yuba City Council in 2014 and was the vice mayor earlier. She is the first in her family to graduate from college and has her master's, the report said.

In an interview to NBC-affliated KCRA-TV, Didbal said on her part, her priorities will be "youth education, homelessness, completing the Fifth Street Bridge project and bridging the gap between the region's growth and economic development".

Courtesy: Asia Samachar
December 6, 2017

Aussie Christian School Amends Uniform Policy to Admit Sikh boy with 'Patka'

"On behalf of Sikhs in Australia, and in Victoria in particular, we are very pleased that VCAT has upheld religious freedom in schools. We applaud Sidhak Singh's parents who took a stand for their child that will benefit all faith communities," said Mejindarpal Kaur, International Legal Director of UNITED SIKHS.



UNITED SIKHS, through its chapters in 10 countries, is ready to help anyone whose religious freedom rights are violated. You may submit your request for advocacy help on our online link at http://unitedsikhs.org/ Know Your Religious Freedom Rights /

Melbourne, Australia: The Melton Christian College (MCC) has amended its uniform policy this month to enrol 5 year old Sidhak Singh in the new academic year, after refusing his admission last year because he wore a patka, a head covering worn by Sikh children.

MCC amended its uniform policy, to allow exceptions where genuine medical or religious grounds exist, following a landmark decision of the Victorian Administrative and Civil Tribunal (VCAT) in Sept 2017 that found that Sidhak Singh had been unlawfully discriminated by MCC when they had refused to enrol him because he had unshorn hair and wore a patka,

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The Tribunal ruled in September that the Melton Christian College (MCC) had indirectly discriminated against Sidhak Singh and violated section 38 of the Equal Opportunity Act 2010 of Victoria that prohibits discrimination by an educational authority in the enrolment of students.

"I consider that MCC's uniform policy in so far as it prohibits head gear of a non-Christian faith, could be described as 'openly discriminatory," said VCAT member, J Grainger, in a 50-page judgment. You may read the full judgment here.

The Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission, which had intervened in the case, had said in a statement, "The Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal's decision in the Arora v Melton Christian College case was an important test for clarifying the exceptions in the Equal Opportunity Act 2010. This is the first time that these exceptions from discrimination have been considered in Victorian courts or tribunals."

"I was approached by UNITED SIKHS in January this year when they learnt that I did not have legal representation. They assisted me and arranged pro bono representation by Herbert Smith Freehills, a top law firm in Australia," Sidhak Singh's father, Sagardeep Singh, said after VCAT's ruling.

VCAT had ordered that Sidhaks parents and MCC attend a compulsory conference to determine what orders VCAT should make. Following the compulsory conference that was held in November, both parties issued the following joint statement:

"MCC, Sagardeep Singh Arora and Anureet Kaur Arora are pleased to have resolved the matter of the enrolment of the Aroras' son, Sidhak Singh Arora, which was the subject of proceedings before the Victorian Civil and Administration Tribunal under the Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic). MCC has made amendments to its uniform policy to allow exceptions where genuine medical or religious grounds exist, such that Sidhak will be able to start at MCC in the beginning of the 2018 school year.

MCC is founded on Christian doctrine, and is committed to an inclusive school community partnering with families in excellent Christian education. MCC regrets the difficulties that took place with respect to the enrolment and the Arora family is grateful to the school for the amendments it has made to the uniform policy in order to welcome Sidhak to the school."

Gurvinder Singh
Director, UNITED SIKHS-Australia
Email: law@unitedsikhs.org

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

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Book Review of: Anmol Sakhia
By: Sdn. Jasbir Kaur
Published by: Perfect Art Publication, New Delhi, 2017
Printed by: B.K. Offset, Delhi
Price: Rs. 225/-

Reviewed by: Dr. Harpreet Kaur*

The book namely, **Anmol Sakhia** written by Sdn. Jasbir Kaur is informative and engrossing. The book is embellished with those anecdotes from the annals of history, which she fondly related to her grandchildren based in USA. Sdn. Jasbir Kaur has been leading a fulsome life with affectionate husband and well-educated and cultured children and it has been her ardent effort to bind the children and grand children with the glorious past. Her larger objective to pen down Sakhisis to acquaint the young generations with the golden heritage and history of the Sikhs. This book has two-fold distinctive objectives, firstly, to make aware the people of the glorious past and secondly, make earnest efforts to preserve our literature and heritage for the posterity.

*Sakhis*are historical accounts or stories that have moral lesson to impart and are instrumental in reiterating the importance of the Sikh history and cardinal principles that are an integral part of the psyche of the Sikhs since time immemorial. The *Janam Sakhis* of the Gurus give a picture of their life happenings and also, represent the turbulent times of the Gurus, which they

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stood to oppose morally and physically. Even at present, it is imperativeto reiterate the Sakhis and their significance especially to the younger generation.

The foreword have been written by S. Makhan Singh, Former Deputy General Manager, Punjab and Sind Bank and President, Punjabi Sahit Kala Sangam who praises the efforts of Sdn. Jasbir Kaur for her efforts to pen down excerpts from history for the benefit of posterity.

The Sakhis incorporated in the book narrate the stories by delving into life and times of the Gurus and the human values exalted by them. Ineffable discourse and stories,in concise form,of Guru Nanak and the successive Gurus and cardinal ethical virtues propounded are embellished in the book. The entire history, from birth till their last, of all Ten Gurus has been encapsulated in precise, crisp and interesting wordsto create an ensuing continuity.

Guru Nanak's vision,arduous sojourns, fervent opposition to the redundant traditions and extensive dialogues at various religious places with prominent religious leaders belonging to several sects establishing the futility of rituals are cited.The episodes related to the early life of Guru Nanak Devji have been written like, the 'SachaSauda' episodeestablishing the primacy of fair occupation in one's life. Guru Nanak had joined the vocation of his father as a shopkeeper; fairness in dealings was paramount to him. '*Na Koi Hindu Na Musalmaan*', the historical proverbpronounced by the Guru establishes oneness in society of those times fragmented on the basis of religion and marked by religious bigotry.Guru Nanak had meal with Bhai Lalo flouting the deep-rooted social norms, dispelling the caste system and echoing that all are born from one God.

Baba Amar Das rendered selfless service to Guru Angad even though his age was more than sixty.He had continual routine offetching water, serving *Langar,* cleaning utensils etc. This Seva was well recognized by Guru Angad Sahib. Bhai Jehta Ji was bestowed by the divine succession and was called as Ram Das, the Fourth Guru of the Sikhs.

Guru Arjun, the Fifth Nanak, a great thinker, philosopher and builder carried forward the legacy and tenets of Sikh faith and gave an institutionalized form to it. The Guru initiated and supervised many new projects with architectural finesse including construction of Amrit Sarovar(pool of nectar), building of the Golden Temple and Santokhsar. The Guru visualized the significance of *Dasvandh* and donating one-tenth of the income became a customary practice with the Sikhs. Guru Arjun called as *'Bani Ka Bohitha'* gave precious and immortal gift of Holy Granth Sahib to the humanity. He laid his life for the cause of righteousness.

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Guru Hargobind, the Sixth Nanak was *Bandi Chhor,* the Saviour Guru. He agreed for his release from the Fort of Gwalior only if accompanied with his co-prisoners, 52 Kings and arrived at Amritsar on auspicious festival of Diwali. Guru Har Rai made earnest efforts to spread *Gurbani* far and wide and send Bhai Genda to Kabul where heassembled Sangat, started Langar and even got constructed a small Gurdwara Sahib in the land where Muslims are predominant. After 14 years of Guruship, He bestowed Guruship on Guru Har Krishan who was at the tender age of five years and eight months.The divine blessings of the Guru gave solace to the residents of Delhi, Hindus and Muslims alike,who had been afflicted by small pox or some mysterious disease byhis healing touch.

Guru TeghBahadur *'Hind Di Chaddar'* or the Sheet of Hindustan or *'Dharam Da Rakha'* or Protector of the Religion laid his life at the altar of Dharma. The Kashmiri Panditsapproached him for they were helplessand feared forcible conversations by the tyrant rulers. For ensuring the freedom to profess religion of one's choice, prolonged tortures were borne by the Guru.

Guru Gobind Singh was nine years old when he assumed all duties after the martyrdom.The Tenth Guru converted Khalsa into mighty warriors through the double-edged sword of *Shakti* and *Bhakti* combined and converted the saints into soldiers to face the prevailing situation. The Guru created a symbiotic relationship in the tradition of *'Ape Gur Chela'* wherein the Tenth Guru bows down before the *Panj Pyaras.* The great Guru maintained a perfect poise of mind even in the supreme sacrifice of near ones. The personal Guruship was abolishedand *'Adi Granth'* was accorded the status of eternal and living Guru of the Sikhs.

A number of anecdotes from the life of the Gurusare included in the book as vividly envisioned by the author.The language of the book is lucid and effortlesslyintelligible by the young children.The preliminary outline ofthe Sikh history and important episodes from the life cycle of the Gurus are explicated in simple language with a renewed viewpoint, which truly absorbing for the readers.The message imparted through the *Sahkis* permeates the heart and soul of the devoted readers in a unique manner and have an impact on the community.In her discerning way, the writer delves into historical anecdotes with conviction and makes an effort to preserve it for future with devotedness.

Sakhis are our treasure trove and an integral part of our golden heritage and play a vital role in inspiring and enlightening generations after generations and such a simple and crisp book isan asset to the present literature.

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CONTENTS

MEDITATION	Discover Pearls of Naam in Life's Oceanic Depths	*Shabad Gurbani*	5
EDITORIAL	Seva: Blessed and Evidence Based	I J Singh	6
THEOLOGY	'Gurparsad' signifies Divine Grace!	Dr. Kirpal Singh, New Zealand	8
PHILOSOPHY	Cosmology According to Guru Nanak Philosophy (Part-II)	Prof. Devinder Singh Chahal	10
MORAL TRADITION	Isnaan - The Ethics of Good Deeds	Dr. (Bhai) Harbans Lal	19
HISTORY	Honouring the memory of Chhote Sahibzade	Dr. Pritam Singh	23
HERITAGE	The Impact of the Atlantic Charter (1941) of India's Independece	Dr. D S Grewal	26
LITERATURE	Letters of Bhai Sahib Bhai Vir Singh Ji: A Guiding Light for the Posterity	Dr. Harpreet Kaur	37
PERSPECTIVES	Introducing the Master Artist - Phulan Rani	Shubhani	43
VIEWPOINT	Memorials Erected - even as Historical - are Erased	Bhupinder Singh (Houston)	49
REFLECTION	The Sikh Thought: A Gentle, if Awe inspiring - Integration of Body and Mind	K S Ahluwalia	53
PANORAMA	Maharaja Ranjit Singh as patron of Arts and Literature	Prin. Sawan Singh Gogia	59
PERSONAL TESTMAMENT	My Meeting with a Sage Scholar: The Incredible Bhai Sahib Sr. Raghbir Singh Bir	Er. Amarjit Singh (Retd.)	63
ACHIEVEMENT	Butler Univ. To Confer KP Singh with - Hon. Doctorate of Humane Letters	Contributed	68
TRIBUTE	A Tribute – (Late) Sr. Manmohan Singh Baveja	Sarabjit Singh Baveja	71
	The (Late) Sr. Manjit Singh 'Calcutta' - A Tribute		
YOUTH SECTION	The story of 'Bal-Leela' True Bargain	Naresh Chandra Mathur	74
POET'S CORNER	You are The Supreme Lord!	Dr. S. S. Sodhi (Canada)	77
READERS' FORUM	Letters to Editor		78
DIARY	Synopsis of Notable Events		80
BOOKS	Jaap Sahib, Swiyyas and Chaupai - Hymns to the Eternal by Prof. Beant Singh	*Reviewed by* V P Prabhakar	82

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Discover Pearls of Naam in Life's Oceanic Depths

ਸੋਰਠਿ ਮਹਲਾ ੫ ॥

ਸਾਧੂ ਸੰਗਿ ਭਇਆ ਮਨਿ ਉਦਮੁ ਨਾਮੁ ਰਤਨੁ ਜਸੁ ਗਾਈ ॥
ਮਿਟਿ ਗਈ ਚਿੰਤਾ ਸਿਮਰਿ ਅਨੰਤਾ ਸਾਗਰੁ ਤਰਿਆ ਭਾਈ ॥੧॥
ਹਿਰਦੈ ਹਰਿ ਕੇ ਚਰਣ ਵਸਾਈ ॥
ਸੁਖੁ ਪਾਇਆ ਸਹਜ ਧੁਨਿ ਉਪਜੀ ਰੋਗਾ ਘਾਣਿ ਮਿਟਾਈ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥
ਕਿਆ ਗੁਣ ਤੇਰੇ ਆਖਿ ਵਖਾਣਾ ਕੀਮਤਿ ਕਹਣੁ ਨ ਜਾਈ ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਭਗਤ ਭਏ ਅਬਿਨਾਸੀ ਅਪੁਨਾ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਭਇਆ ਸਹਾਈ ॥

[SGGS : 619]

Translation*

In holy company is the mind inspired to endeavour in the Way of God,
And laudation of the jewel Name have I sung.
By contemplation of the Lord infinite is my anxiety gone,
And the ocean of existence is crossed. (1)

In my heart are lodged Feet of the Lord.
Joy I have obtained, acquired is equipoise,
And swarms of maladies effaced. (Pause)

What power have I on Thy merits to discourse?
Inexpressible is Thy greatness!

Saith Nanak: God's devotees have attained immortality,
As the Lord has become their helper. (2) (13.41)

*Based on Prof. Gurbachan Singh Talib's rendering.

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SEVA: Blessed and Evidence-Based

*I. J. Singh**

An essay leaning on science to parse an enduring practice? An instinctive reaction might be to chuckle. But we prefer all information or events evidence-based, whether life and death, love and hate, war and peace, even religion.

Seva, one leg of the defining triad of Sikhi, mandates sharing life's rewards with the needy. Two additional legs are honest earnings, and awareness of the Infinite within us all, enabling universal connectivity.

Honest earning and sharing with others are social constructs emerging from spiritual underpinnings of Sikhi. Social and spiritual facets, like a pair of oxen yoked to a plow, tethered to common purpose. These two imperatives **(Miri & Piri)**, never to be ideologically sundered, form a whole greater than the sum of the parts of a non-negotiable tenet.

How logically tenable are our hypotheses about seva? Is our DNA hardwired for seva?

An Op-Ed in The New York Times caught my eye. The headline "Don't Indulge Be Happy," unlike pop psyche, spoke to me of the bedrock foundations of Sikhi. The authors: Elizabeth Dunn and Michael Norton, respectively professors at British Columbia and Harvard. Their research methodology, bound by the rules of academia, and their hypothesis opens some windows of the mind.

Their topic: Human attitudes after people reach a level of material comfort. They posit (and I quote) that "once you have achieved $75,000 annual income in the USA, earning more doesn't increase happiness. For middle class America, this amount, neither piddlingly small nor obscenely large, is attainable. Beyond this reasonable number, excessive wealth accumulation doesn't help.

The moral: Even though money is a critically important need, there is more to life.

We can spend money either on ourselves or on others. Research shows that **happiness is more intense and longer lasting if the money is spent on others.** Dunn and Norton note that: "Even

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children feel better when they share what they have." Self- overindulgence remains unsatisfying. We are better served by buying simply for others, rather than more for ourselves.

Our "needs" are few and simple, our "wants" never-ending. The gulf between the two defines us. Remember the oft-quoted lines from the Sikh morning prayer (Guru Granth p.1), **ਭੁਖਿਆ ਭੁਖ ਨ ਉਤਰੀ ਜੇ ਬੰਨਾ ਪੁਰੀਆ ਭਾਰ ॥** ***"Bhukyaa(n) bhukh na utrae jay banna purya(n) paar..."***

Seva defines sharing our lives with others. Giving unto others in need, not only addresses their need; more importantly, **it sates our own inner urge to share and give.** That's an important measure of a productive, well-lived life -- and that is an existential need.

From a bargain, seva becomes a necessity. Look not for payoffs of seva. Never cavil or complain when the gods seem to overlook our lifetime of seva and, despite our prayers, the lottery ticket doesn't pan out.

The human DNA houses the propensity to seek instant gratification for a good deed, as well as the gene for seva. Ergo, Guru Granth asks that we lose the self in seva so that the cause transcends the self (Aap gavayay seva karay taa kitch paayay maan...Guru Granth p. 474). St. Francis of Assisi offers a similar notion: "It is in giving that we receive..."

Instant reward and a sense of entitlement must be banished. Guru Granth says so, and now so do these scientists.

Dunn and Norton likely have no desire to be drawn into any religion's creed or traditions, even though their observations merge language and methodology of both science and the spiritual reality.

Seva is a fundamental human drive to help others. Both science and religion provide remarkable insights into the human mind. Their tools and languages are different but complementary.

An exchange with Guruka Singh at Sikhnet, highlighted four fundamental truths rooted in Sikhi: 1. Our happiness is inversely proportional to our obsession about our own predicaments; 2. Seva is transformational for those engaged in it; 3. As the source of all power, Seva is the way to uplift the self and humanity; and 4. Seva is never a commercial transaction.

Without intellect and faith yoked to each other and operating in tandem, religion is reduced to dogma and rituals, while science becomes mere technique and mechanics. ❑

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'Gurparsad' signifies Divine Grace!

*DR. KIRPAL SINGH, WELLINGTON, NEW ZEALAND**

Gurparsad is the stepping stone to obtain Gurmat Naam in order to grasp godly virtues enshrined in the 'Mool Mantar' narrated by Guru Nanak Sahib in Jap Ji.

'Gurparsad' is a 'Divine Umbrella' and on receiving a glimpse of 'Gurparsad' one feels as if one is blessed with *Sohjee, Kirpa, Nadr,* Grace and all the other elements of Bhagati (comprising of Faith, *Dhrirr Bharosa, Sardha, Aasra, Visah, Vishwas*.....,which follow on running automatically).

ਗੁਰ ਪਰਸਾਦੀ ਬੁਝਿਆ ਜਾ ਵੇਖਾ ਹਰਿ ਇਕੁ ਹੈ ਹਰਿ ਬਿਨੁ ਅਵਰੁ ਨ ਕੋਈ ॥ [Raag Raamkali M. 3, SGGS: 922-7].

By Guru's Grace, I understand, and I see only the One Lord; there is no one except the Lord.

Guru Nanak Sahib thrived on the Gurparsad of Akalpurakh (Ik Oankaar) to receive 'Sat Naam', which he shared with Bhai Lehna Ji who on partaking Gurparsad became Guru Angad Dev Ji. Likewise Guru Amardas Ji received Gurparsad from Guru Angad Dev Ji who in turn blessed Bhai Jetha Ji with Gurparsad to turn him into Guru Ram Das Ji - an unparallel example of a rise 'from rags to riches' (a blue collared person who was spotted selling boiled chick peas and later became founder of Amritsar - the heart beat of Sikhi in present time). Similarly the other Gurus received the blessing of precedings Gurus who shared their 'Gurparsad' to raise them to Gurudom.

According to Gurmat (Gurbani) Ik Oankaar is present in all of us. However, we need 'Gurparsad' to realise the same in us:-

ਮਨ ਤਨ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਏਕੁ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਰਾਤਾ ॥ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਨਾਨਕ ਇਕੁ ਜਾਤਾ ॥੮॥੧੯॥ [Raag Gauri, M.5, SGGS: 289-8]

Mind and body within are imbued with the One God.By Guru's Grace, O Nanak, the One is known. ||8||19||

Gurparsad is the result of Gur-Seva (ਗੁਰ ਸੇਵਾ), which brings one's self awareness (how insignificant is one) to Bhagati/ Devotion (ਭਗਤਿ).

*Professor Emeritus, # 1/19, Caldwell Street, Karori , Wellington 6012, New Zealand
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ਗੁਰ ਸੇਵਾ ਬਿਨੁ ਭਗਤਿ ਨ ਹੋਵੀ ਕਿਉ ਕਰਿ ਚੀਨਸਿ ਆਪੈ ॥
[Raag Maaroo M. 1, SGGS. 1013-1]

According to Gurbani, the Divine realisation comes only on removal of one's self-conceited ego with Gurparsad (as a result of Serving the Guru):-

ਸੋ ਸੰਨਿਆਸੀ ਜੋ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਸੇਵੈ ਵਿਚਹੁ ਆਪੁ ਗਵਾਏ ॥
[Raag Maaroo M. 1, SGGS. 1013-9]

He alone is a Sannyaasi, who serves the True Guru, and removes his self-conceit from within.

Finally, the liberation is promised in spiritual vibration of Sat Naam - received from Gurbani.

ਸਭਿ ਸੁਖ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਨਾਮ ਧੁਨਿ ਬਾਣੀ ਸਚੁ ਨਾਮੁ ਉਰ ਧਾਰੀ ॥
[Raag Maaroo M. 1, SGGS: 1013-14]

All comforts and liberation are found in the Naam, and the vibrations of the Guru's Bani; I have enshrined the True Name within my heart.

ਨਾਮ ਬਿਨਾ ਨਹੀ ਛੂਟਸਿ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਾਚੀ ਤਰੁ ਤੂ ਤਾਰੀ ॥੯॥੭॥

Without the Naam, no one is saved; O Nanak, with the Truth, cross over to the other side. ||9||7||

The awareness of Ik Oankaar comes when the doubt about this Sat Naam is dispelled (ਗੁਰ ਪਰਸਾਦਿ ਭਰਮ ਕਾ ਨਾਸੁ ॥).

ਗੁਰ ਪਰਸਾਦਿ ਭਰਮ ਕਾ ਨਾਸੁ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਤਿਨ ਮਹਿ ਏਹੁ ਬਿਸਾਸੁ ॥੩॥ [Raag Gauri M. 5, SGGS: 294-5]

By Guru's Grace, doubt is dispelled.O Nanak, this faith is firmly implanted within. ||3||

Today, we have more Gurbani accessible to guide us as compared to what was once available to most of the Sikh Gurus in their life times except Guru Teg Bhadur Ji and Guru Gobind Singh Ji, yet we are not so spiritual - perhaps we are still lost in doubt (ਭਰਮ) about ' Ik Oankaar Sat Naam'.

It appers we ignore the candid advice of Guru Arjan Dev Ji while living in doubts about the existence of Ik Oankar around us:-

ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮੁ ਜਿਨਿ ਸਚੁ ਕਰਿ ਜਾਤਾ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਸੋ ਜਨੁ ਸਚਿ ਸਮਾਤਾ ॥੮॥੧੫॥ [Raag Gauri M. 5, SGGS: 283-15]

One who recognizes the Supreme Lord God as True- O Nanak, that humble being is absorbed into the True One. ||8||15||

Let us pray for Gurparsad so that we get the necessary Divine 'Sohjee' to realise 'Ik Oankaar Sat Naam'.

ਨਾਮ ਸੰਗਿ ਜਿਸ ਕਾ ਮਨੁ ਮਾਨਿਆ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਤਿਨਹਿ ਨਿਰੰਜਨੁ ਜਾਨਿਆ ॥੩॥ [Raag Gauri M. 5, SGGS: 281-11]

One whose mind accepts the Company of the Naam,The Name of the Lord, O Nanak, knows the Immaculate Lord. ||3||

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Cosmology According To Nanakian Philosophy

PROF. DEVINDER SINGH CHAHAL, PH.D*

PART - II

ABSTRACT

The relationship between Religion and Science has always been inconflict. Earlier, pioneer philosophers were punished for their discoveries by the Church since such discoveries were found against the concepts in Bible.This paper discusses the study of two contemporaries of the Period of the Renaissance. When Copernicus was studying Astronomy in Europe and Guru Nanak was studying Cosmology in South Asia. It also discusses the discovery of Heliocentric System (the Earth revolves around the Sun) by Copernicus and its confirmation by Galileo. Both were punished because their discovery shocked the Church's concept that it is the Sun, which revolves around the Earth. It also discusses that the study of Cosmology of Guru Nanak is very much comparable to origin of Universe according to the Big Bang Theory.

Cosmology of Guru Nanak

The cosmology of Guru Nanak starts with the understanding of ੧ਓ as ਇਕ ਓ ਬੇਅੰਤ (*Ek Oh Beant*) in Punjabi and as 'The One and Only, The One (Singularity) with infinite amount of Energy:

Is It Big Bang

Guru Nanak has very clearly stated that the Universe came into existence with one bang as follows:

ਕੀਤਾ ਪਸਾਉ[1] ਏਕੋ ਕਵਾਉ[2]

Kita pasao eko kavao.

ਤਿਸ ਤੇ ਹੋਏ ਲਖ ਦਰੀਆਉ[3] ॥

Tis te hoe lakh dariao.

This phrase has been interpreted very literally by many scholars as follows:

You created the vast expanse[1] of the Universe with One Word[2]! Hundreds of thousands of rivers[3] began to flow.

[Jap 16 - SGGS: 3]

Using present day science and the methodology of Guru Nanak, remembering that he would express his philosophy allegorically,metaphorically and symbolically, then my interpretation will be quite different from that of all other writers. My interpretation is as follows:

The Universe exploded with one sound[2] (bang) and started to

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expand1, hereafter appeared many3 things, Jap 16, p 3.

ਤਿਸ ਤੇ ਹੋਏ ਲਖ ਦਰੀਆਉ[3] ॥

Note:

1. ਪਸਾਉ[1] (*pasao*) means to expand.
2. ਕਵਾਉ[2] (*kavao*) means sound, not word or note.
3. ਦਰੀਆਉ[3] (*daryao*) has been literally interpreted as rivers by many scholars. Keeping in view the methodology used by Guru Nanak, 'ਦਰੀਆਉ[3]' (daryao) has been used as a metaphor for the word, things. What are those things?

The word, 'ਲਖ ਦਰੀਆਉ[3]' (*lakh dariao*), has been used to mean many things, because of the limited vocabulary available at that time. However, one must understand that no water was formed immediately after the Big Bang. It took billions of years to form water on the Earth. Therefore, 'ਲਖ ਦਰੀਆਉ[3]' (*lakh dariao*), is a metaphoric expression of many things (that means starting from elementary particles to protons, electrons, neutrons, neutrinos which formed various elements.The first element formed was Hydrogen with one proton encircled with one electron. Then Helium was formed joining two protons and two neutrons in nucleus encircled by two electrons. Thereafter, many more elements appeared to give rise to many galaxies contain many stars and planets.

The word, ਦਰੀਆਉ[3]' (*dariao*), in the above phrase of Guru has been explained with a new word, ਸਭਿ (*sabh* -everything) by Guru Arjan:

ਏਕ[1] ਕਵਾਵੈ[2] ਤੇ ਸਭਿ[3] ਹੋਆ[4] ॥੧॥

Ek kavavai te sab hoa. ||1||

With one[1] sound[2] (bang) everything[3] appeared[4]. [SGGS: M 5, p 1003]

Note:

'ਏਕ[1] ਕਵਾਵੈ[2] (*ek kavavai*) in the above phrase is the same as ਏਕੋ ਕਵਾਉ[2] '(*eko kavao*) of Guru Nanak's previous verse.

Guru Nanak's concept of origin of the Universe of 15th century is very similar to the most accepted theory of Big Bang of 20thcentury. Although similar teachings of the formation of the Universe with one 'word'of God can be found in other religious scriptures, Guru Nanak has given a more in-depth explanation of its origin from the '੧' (Ek – One) in ੴ as Singularity.

Infiniteness of the Universe

The Universe continues to expand after the Big Bang occurred no limit to its future expansion has been established according to the present day scientific knowledge. Guru Nanak explains the infiniteness of the Universe as follows:

ਪਾਤਾਲਾ[1]ਪਾਤਾਲ[1] ਲਖ ਆਗਾਸਾ[2] ਆਗਾਸ[2]॥

Patala patal lakh agasa agas.

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ਓੜਕ ਓੜਕ ਭਾਲਿ ਥਕੇ ਵੇਦ ਕਹਨਿ ਇਕ ਵਾਤ ॥

Orak orak bhal thake ved kahan ik vat.

ਸਹਸ ਅਠਾਰਹ[3] ਕਹਨਿ ਕਤੇਬਾ ਅਸੁਲੂ ਇਕੁ ਧਾਤੁ[4] ॥

Sahas atharah kahan kateba asulu ik daat.

ਲੇਖਾ[5] ਹੋਇ ਤ ਲਿਖੀਐ ਲੇਖੈ ਹੋਇ ਵਿਣਾਸੁ ॥

Lekha hoe ta likiai lekai hoe vinas.

ਨਾਨਕ ਵਡਾ ਆਖੀਐ ਆਪੇ[6] ਜਾਣੈ ਆਪੁ ॥੨੨॥

Nanak vada akiai ape janai aap. ll22ll

There are hundreds of thousands of nether worlds[1], and hundreds of thousands of skies[2].

After great research, the Vedas have said it definitely as above.

The Semitic books say that there are eighteen thousand[3] worlds and that is the fact4.

However, Nanak says:

It cannot be possible to count[5] (number of the celestial bodies in the Universe) because the accounting person may reach the end of his life during counting and it will still be incomplete.

Guru Nanak further says:

That Eternal Entity(God)[6] is great who knows the account (of the celestial bodies in the Universe). [Jap: 22, SGGS: 5]

In the first two lines of this stanza, Guru Nanak refers to what the Vedas say that there are hundreds of thousands of *patal*(nether worlds) and hundreds of thousands of skies; on the other hand, the Semitic books say that there are 18,000 worlds in the next third line. This is the information of the Vedas and the Semitic books but not the views of Guru Nanak. However, some theologians and preachers erroneously interpret that it is Guru Nanak as saying that there are lacs (hundreds of thousands) of patal (nether worlds) and lacs of skies. They also claim that Guru Nanak was a great scientist to say so. They ignore the fact that this information in Vedas and Semitic books.

Scientifically there is no nether world in this Universe; it is an ancient myth. Similarly, there is no sky. The color of sky on a clear cloudless daytime is because blue light is scattered in all directions by the tiny molecules of air in Earth's atmosphere.

Is the color due to the depth of the air around the Earth through which the sunlight passes before coming to us; in fact, it is a void or space or Dark Energy.

After quoting the information available or the accepted concept ofthat time, Guru Nanak gives his own observations in the final two lines. He says that the Cosmos (Universe) contains countless celestial bodies; the real number would be known only to the Eternal Entity (God).

According to the present scientific information, there are billions of galaxies and each galaxy is composed of billions of stars

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and their planets and moons. Our Sun, having eight planets revolving around it, is one of the billions of stars of our galaxy, Milky Way.

Time of the Origin of the Universe

When did the Universe come into existence? As already discussed, now we know the time of origin of the Universe is approximately 13.77 billion years ago. However,about 548 years ago Guru Nanak said that it was difficult to estimate the time of the origin of Universe in his following stanza:

ਕਵਣ ਸੁ ਵੇਲਾ[1] ਵਖਤੁ[2] ਕਵਣੁ ਕਵਣ ਥਿਤਿ[3] ਕਵਣੁ ਵਾਰੁ[4]॥

Kavan so vela vakhat kavan kavan thit kavan var.

ਕਵਣਿ ਸਿ ਰੁਤੀ[5] ਮਾਹੁ ਕਵਣੁ ਜਿਤੁ ਹੋਆ ਆਕਾਰੁ[6] ॥

Kavan se ruti mahu kavan jit hoa aakaar.

Guru Nanak first poses a question:

What was that time[1]; and what was that time/ moment[2];

What was that month[3];and what was that day[4];

What was that season[5]; and what was that month[6]: when the Universe was created[7]? [Jap 21- SGGS, , p 4]

Then he answers as follows:

ਵੇਲੁ[2] ਨ ਪਾਈਆ ਪੰਡਤੀ ਜਿ ਹੋਵੈ ਲੇਖੁ ਪੁਰਾਣੁ ॥

vel napaia pandti je hovai lekh puran.

ਵਖਤੁ[2] ਨ ਪਾਇਓ ਕਾਦੀਆ ਜਿ ਲਿਖਨਿ ਲੇਖੁ ਕੁਰਾਣੁ ॥

vakhat na paio kadia je likhan lekh kuran.

ਥਿਤਿ[3] ਵਾਰੁ ਨਾ ਜੋਗੀ ਜਾਣੈ ਰੁਤਿ ਮਾਹੁ ਨਾ ਕੋਈ ॥

Thit var na jogi janai rut mahu na koei.

The pundits could not find that time[1], whether it was written in the Puranas.

That time/moment[2] is not known to the qazis either, if it were written in the Koran.

Nor the month[3] nor the day[4] nor the season[5] nor the month6 is known to the yogis. [8] [Jap: 21 - SGGS: 4]

Note:

ਥਿਤਿ (tith) means month according to the lunar calendar.

ਮਾਹੁ (mah) means month according to the solar calendar.

Then who knows the answer?

Guru Nanak answers it as follows:

ਜਾ ਕਰਤਾ[1] ਸਿਰਠੀ[2] ਕਉ ਸਾਜੇ[3] ਆਪੇ[4] ਜਾਣੈ ਸੋਈ ॥

Ja karta sirthi kao saje ape janai soi.

Only the Creator[1],[4], Who created[3] the Universe[2], knows it (the time of creation). [8] [Jap 21- SGGS: 4]

Origin of Our Solar System

It has been discussed earlier that the origin of the Universe wasnot known to the *pundits, kazis*, and *jogis*. Guru Nanak says it is known onlyto that Entity (God). In the following verse, Guru Nanak explains the formation of our solar system, and the date

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of formation goes back more than a billion years (today it is known as 4.6 billion years ago). He describes the primordial state of our solar system as a mass of gases in our galaxy:

ਅਰਬਦ ਨਰਬਦ[1] ਧੁੰਧੂਕਾਰਾ[2] ॥

Arbad narbad dhundhu kara.

ਧਰਣਿ[3] ਨ ਗਗਨਾ[4] ਹੁਕਮੁ[5] ਅਪਾਰਾ[6]॥

dharan na gagna hukam apara.

ਨਾ ਦਿਨੁ ਰੈਨਿ[7] ਨ ਚੰਦੁ ਨ ਸੂਰਜੁ **ਸੁੰਨ** ਸਮਾਧਿ ਲਗਾਇਦਾ ॥੧॥

Na din rain na chand na suraj sunn samadh lagaida. ||1|| .....

ਜਾ ਤਿਸੁ ਭਾਣਾ[9] ਤਾ ਜਗਤੁ[10] ਉਪਾਇਆ[11] ॥

Ja tis bhana ta jagat upaiaa.

More than a billion years ago[1],

There was only a mass of gases[2].

There was no Earth[3] or sky[4], but only the laws[5] of the Infinite[6] (God).

There was no day, no night[7], no Moon, no Sun, but Nothingness[8] by itself.1...

After long description of absence of what is happening and about people living today on the Earththen Guru Nanak says:

According to the Laws of Nature[9] the mass of gases formed[10] the world[11] (Solar System with eight planets including our Earth as our world.)...14. [SGGS, M 1, p 1035]

Here, Guru Nanak explains the primordial state of our Solar System as a mass of gases but it is erroneously interpreted by some theologians to explain the primordial state of the Universe. Actually, the Universe originated with the Big Bang from **ਸੁੰਨ** (*sunn*)(nothingness)or from the 'ੴ' (Ek – One) in ੴ as Singularity, whereas our Solar System originated from a mass of gasses already existing in our galaxy, the Milky Way.

Note: ਅਰਬਦ ਨਰਬਦ[1] (*arbad narbad*): arbad (a colloquial word for arb) means one billion and narbad means that which cannot be counted in arbad; therefore, arbadnarbad, means more than one billion, may be a period of tens of billions of years. The present estimation of origin of the Universe is 13.77 billion years and that of Solar System is about 4.6 billion years.

3. ਹੁਕਮ (*hukm*) Guru Nanak calls the Laws of Nature/Universe as the Laws of the Eternal Entity (God) - (*hukm*)

8. **ਸੁੰਨ** (*sunn*) has been interpreted as nothingness, which has been explained as follows:

Sunn (ਸੁੰਨ) – Is It Nothingness?

The "Nothingness" has been described by Kaup [23] as Follows:

"Nothingness Theory defines nonexistence as being the absence of

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existence, the absence of nothingness, and the absence of absence. It is what is not being referred-to under any circumstances. Nonexistence by definition is that which cannot be referred-to, named, or defined. So referring – to it in any way violates its strict definition. But this fundamental paradox is at the basis of Nothingness Theory and must be referred-to anyway. Despite it's not being, absolute nonexistence exerts a detectable force. We have proven through simple logic that the Universe has and always will exist. Therefore, the Universe must have existed before the "Big Bang" and *will exist forever. This also means that the state of nothingness from which the Universe burst into existence must have existed relative to absolute nonexistence given that absolute nonexistence is not achievable. So space/time – matter/energy can attain relative nonexistence by collapsing into infinite density, which is a uniform state of static equilibrium. Examples of this state of relative nonexistence can be seen throughout the Universe in the form of 'black holes'."*

A black hole is created when matter and space become concentrated so that there is no differentiation between them. To apprehend the full meaning of existence, nonexistence, energy, matter and force, one must embrace the paradox embodied in a black hole. The essence of a black hole is that it isn't there, but it has a location relative to existing systems upon which it exerts the most powerful cosmic force. It is an area of nonexistence that has no area. The so-called super-massive black holes, apparently at the center of every galaxy, swallow up entire solar systems and yet contain nothing inside of them because they have no inside to fill up. [21]

Nothingness does not mean, without anything. In fact, the thing is there but it is in a so small volume that it appears to be nothingness. This nothingness, as described by Kaup [23], actually is the pinnacle of perfectly symmetrical uniformity of matter, energy, space and time. According to the Big Bang Theory, the energy was in such a small volume that has been termed as Nothingness by some and as Singularity by others. This Nothingness was termed सुंन (sunn) by Guru Nanak during the 15th century. Healso called it jyot (highly condensed energy). The following discussion will further strengthen it.

It is also important to understand contents of the Universe. Kaup [23] defines the Universe (Cosmos) as follows:

"The Universe is anything that has been, or ever will be detectable by humans. It is the manifestation of temporal existence – composed of matter, energy, space, and time, and is the macro-system of which all natural systems are a sub-set."

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It can be concluded from the above discussion that the Sunn of Guru Nanak is Nothingness or Singularity as described by scientists in which space/time, matter/ energy has attained relative nonexistence by collapsing into infinite density, which is a uniform state of static equilibrium. It is also called ਨਿਰਗੁਣ (*nirgun*) state of that Eternal Entity (God). This Sunn (Nothingness or Singularity) after the Big Bang gave rise to elementary particles then to protons, neutrons, electrons, neutrinos, and anti-matter. The combination of one proton and one electron formed first element, hydrogen. By addition of one neutron with proton in the nucleus,one more electron (2) around it gave rise to second element, Helium. Therefore, with each addition of proton, neutron and electron more elements were formed. These elements gave rise to the whole Universe. This Universe is the ਸਰਗੁਣ (*sargun*) state of that Eternal Entity (God).

The *panj tatt* (five elements) mentioned in the above phrase of Guru Nanak areearth, water, air, fire, aether or sky is according to ancient and Vedantic-philosophies. Scientifically these are not elements. However, these are either compound (water), mixtures (earth and air) or just void or Dark Energy (sky). These cannot form the Universe since they are the part of this Universe. These so-called elements are only the parts of our Earth not the part of the whole Universe. For examples,Stars (Suns) inthis Universeare only Hydrogen and Helium.

I compare the *paj tatt* as Hydrogen, Carbon, Oxygen, Nitrogen, and Phosphorus, which gave rise to the DNA (Deoxyribonucleic Acid) molecule, which is called 'Thread of Life'. There is no life without DNA on this Earth. In addition, these five elements are the bases to form organic matter.

The above discussion of ੧ (One) of Guru Nanak in ੧ and ਸੁੰਨ (*sunn*) represent the Singularityand Nothingness, respectively, in which space/time and matter/energy have attained relative nonexistence (Nothingness, ਸੁੰਨ - sunn) by collapsing into infinite density, which is a uniform state of static equilibrium.

CONCLUSIONS

- Guru Nanak and Copernicus were contemporariesduring the Period of the Renaissance and both were 70 years old. Copernicus was four years younger to Guru Nanak.
- Copernicus and Galileo were working on Astronomy by observations of Nature, use of Mathematics and newly invented telescope in 1609 in Europe while Guru Nanak in the South Asia was studying Cosmology just by observation of Nature and its Laws.

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• The discovery on Heliocentric System (Sun is the center and Earth revolves around it) of Copernicus and its confirmation by Galileo shocked the concept of the Bible that Earth is the center and Sun revolves around the Earth. Both were condemned by the Church and their publications were banned and were also declared heretics and punished.

• On the other hand, it is my assumption, that Guru Nanak's discovery about Cosmos remained hidden for more than 135 years (from 1469 to 1604) until it was compiled in the Aad Guru Granth Sahib, Holy Scriptures of the Sikhs, by Guru Arjan. Thereafter, his philosophy in his bani was misinterpreted under the influence of Vedanta as observed by Taran Singh [25]that is why he did not get any strong oppositionexcept that he was prisoned by Babar for a short time and he was called as ghost or demon by the opposition group. Thereafter, Guru Arjan and Guru TegBahadur were persecuted for preaching and practising the philosophy of Guru Nanak.

• These incidences with Copernicus, Galileo and Sikh Gurus indicate that it is difficult to preach/teach the truth. However, it is also apparent that truth cannot be kept hidden for a long time. ❑

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Isnaan – The Ethics of Good Deeds

*Bhai Harbans Lal**

Isnaan in Sikhism is the third of the three pillars of fulfilled life, Naam, Daan, and Isnaan. Isnaan literally means cleansing practices. It encompasses all those deeds, learnings, processes, or religiosities that are potent in cleansing. The object of cleansing is the mind, body, and their environments, in that order.

The cleansing deeds may be physical, cognitive or intellectual. The priority is to cleanse the inner faculties; mind, intellect, consciousness alike. Then comes the body to be washed from inside and out. The body cleansing alone has no impact on inner cleansing.

Age-Old Filths Carried As Memes

Numerous undesirable impressions, ideations, and habits spread from person to person within and across cultures. In modern science, these are called memes. A meme is an idea, behavior, or style that acts as a unit for carrying cultural ideas, symbols, or practices that can be transmitted from one mind to another through writing, speech, gestures, rituals, or other imitable phenomena.

Memes form clusters in the human brain. A collection of all these clusters taken together is described in the Sikhi phraseology as MANN or m'n.

Supporters of the concept regard memes as cultural analogs to genes in that they self-replicate, mutate, and respond to selective pressures. Once they are formed they are hard to get rid of; therefore, the teachings of Isnaan.

ਜਨਮ ਜਨਮ ਕੀ ਇਸੁ ਮਨ ਕਉ ਮਲੁ ਲਾਗੀ ਕਾਲਾ ਹੋਆ ਸਿਆਹੁ ॥ [SGGS: 651]

The human cognition and mind, that is Mann, are blackened with the dust of cultural memes and the narcissist memes accumulated over many cycles of cultural birth and death.

Further, once MANN is smudged everything else around us is also smudged, and they maintain continuous reinfections that are hard to clean. The wise men noted that this was an enigma only a few realize.

ਮਨਿ ਮੈਲੈ ਸਭੁ ਕਿਛੁ ਮੈਲਾ ਤਨਿ ਧੋਤੈ ਮਨੁ ਹਛਾ ਨ ਹੋਇ ॥
ਇਹ ਜਗਤੁ ਭਰਮਿ ਭੁਲਾਇਆ ਵਿਰਲਾ ਬੂਝੈ ਕੋਇ ॥੧॥ [SGGS:558]

*The author has written a more comprehensive article of Isnaan recently pubished in the J. Studies in Sikhism and Comparative Religion, Vol. 32:1, Pages 31-41, 2013
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If the Mann or mind is Soiled, all is Soiled,: by bathing the body, the mind is cleansed not. This world is led astray by Misgiving, and rare is the one who knows the Truth.

This is a vital point: people try to infect each other with those memes which they find most appealing, regardless of the memes' objective value or truth. In the field of religion, the clerics class is one example of professionals who continually infect people's mind with ever-increasing religiosity.

The immediate impact may not be visible. But, like the carrier of the cliff-jumping meme might never actually take the plunge; they may spend the rest of their long lives infecting other people with the meme, inducing millions of gullible fools to leap to their deaths. Historically, this sort of thing is happening all the time.

The Deed of Isnaan

At the practical level, Guru Nanak described Isnaan as:

ਨਾਉ ਨੀਰੁ ਚੰਗਿਆਈਆ ਸਤੁ ਪਰਮਲੁ ਤਨਿ ਵਾਸੁ ॥ [SGGS:16]

Let your body and mind take a cleansing bath with the waters of Goodness to be followed by application of the scented oil of the Truthfulness that produces irresistible fragrance transmitting only welcome memes.

ਗੁਰੁ ਦਰੀਆਉ ਸਦਾ ਜਲੁ ਨਿਰਮਲੁ ਮਿਲਿਆ ਦੁਰਮਤਿ ਮੈਲੁ ਹਰੈ ॥ ਸਤਿਗੁਰਿ ਪਾਇਐ ਪੂਰਾ ਨਾਵਣੁ ਪਸੂ ਪਰੇਤਹੁ ਦੇਵ ਕਰੈ ॥੨॥ [SGGS: 1329]

The Divine Wisdom is the perennial spring of the pure water of Life Force which is competent to remove impurities and paralysis of the human soul, and the Guru, therefore, is the only fulfillment and refuge for any person for him to transcend himself from humanity to divinity.

While stressing on the treatment by Isnaan, the Eternal Wisdom also advised us to take the preventive measures so that we avoid the infection of the mind.

ਸੋ ਕਿਛੁ ਕਰਿ ਜਿਤੁ ਮੈਲੁ ਨ ਲਾਗੈ ॥ ਹਰਿ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਮਹਿ ਏਹੁ ਮਨੁ ਜਾਗੈ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ [SGGS: 199]

Though your body and mind, practice only those deeds that do not permit soiling of the body and mind. Your mind may remain continuously alert and connected to the life-giving awareness of the Creator manifested in the whole creation and its environment.

Conclusion

This metaphor of a bath as Isnaan is meant to elucidate a major lesson on Sikh values and behaviors.

The memes of cultural practices made up of Narcissism, and other selfish genes have been polluting the human Consciousness for ages. These memes are viruses that have been multiplying in the

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human mind and MANN throughout the cultural history of humankind. Their viral spread is badly needed to be disinfected. The crust formed from that infection requires scrubbing off by the deeds of Isnaan. There is no other way.

While practices of Isnaan will cleanse the mind, the practice Naam and Daan (discussed in previous blogs) will prevent those viruses from re-infecting the human spirit. It will ensure the everlasting health of the human mind and the universal consciousness. As Guru stressed, this cannot be accomplished by washing the body even in the waters at the places of pilgrimages.

In Sikhism, cleansing of both body and mind are stressed. It is a total negation of toxic environment as well as evil thoughts. It is the opening of your heart, your mind, your life and your relationships to a process of detoxification. That process is described as Isnaan.

Such teaching is religious and found in older scriptures. As Jesus is known to say, *Wash and make yourselves clean. Take your evil deeds out of my sight; stop doing wrong. Isaiah 1:16.* ❑

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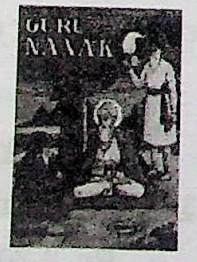


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Honouring the memory of 'Chhote Sahibzade'

*Dr. Pritam Singh**

In the end of the month of December, every year the global Sikh community honours the memory of the two younger sons of Guru Gobind Singh who were martyred at a very young age. The youngest Fateh Singh born on 25 February, 1699 was not even seven when he was martyred on Dec 12, 1705 along with his elder brother Zorawar Singh, born on 17 November 1696, who had just turned nine. As childhood in all cultures is associated with innocence and purity, the story of children as young as the two Sahibzadas were, being subjected to brutal torture leading to death, is one of the most painful memories in Sikh history.

When we reflect on the martyrdom of the two Sahibzadas, several aspects of human history and human character come to the mind. First let us look at some aspects of human history. Throughout human history, there has been struggle between, on one hand, those who are in power and use that power to commit atrocities on those whom they consider as their opponents, and, on the other, those who stand for the dignity of human freedom and are willing to give even their life for their faith and beliefs. In some accounts, this is described as the perpetual conflict between evil and good. In this case, Wazir Khan, the faujdar of Sirhind represented evil and the two Sahibzadas represented good. Those who are in a position of power are, most often, able to recognise the exercise of their power only through inflicting pain on those they consider as a threat –real, potential or imaginary- to their power. In some cases, the powerful are so deranged by their power that they turn sadistic- they enjoy inflicting pain on others. There are several accounts of prisoners or persons in police or army custody who are no threat to their captors but they are subjected to inhuman torture by prison officers or police or army personnel for the sheer sadistic

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pleasure derived by torturing them. Momentarily, those who are in power feel victorious but in the long run, humanity recognises those who bear torture for their beliefs and ideas, and dumps the torturers to the dustbin of history. Who remembers that Wazir Khan or that Qazi who was first reluctant to pronounce the verdict of guilty on the Sahibzadas because according to his understanding of Islamic law, the boys were not guilty of any crime but then succumbed to the pressure of Wazir Khan and ordered the execution of the Sahibzadas by bricking them up alive. We do not know if there are any descendants of Wazir Khan and that of Qazi but if there were to be any, they would be ashamed of family association with them. On the contrary, the Sahibzadas are remembered with love, admiration, reverence and inspiration by millions and they would continue to be remembered this way. A broad lesson of history is that evil wins momentarily but good wins eventually.

Let us now look at several aspects of human character. Let us first reflect on the conduct of the Sahibzadas who at that young age climb to the heights of wisdom, bravery, steadfastness and unshakeable faith. They were obviously conscious of the great tradition set by their grandfather, Guru Tegh Bahadur, who had given his life to defend the religious human rights of his ideological opponents- the Kashmiri Brahmins. It is not difficult to imagine that they were educated about their family history and the high traditions of their faith by their grandmother, Mata Gujari, who would have taught them about the prime need to remain firm in their belief and faith, and that remaining true to one's faith was of higher order even if it meant giving one's life than abandoning faith for the mere physical survival of one's body They were young in age but mature in their understanding of their historic role. This also tells us that although there are physical and biological limits associated with age, these limits are flexible. Someone can be young but very wise and brave while someone else can be mature in age but infantile in behaviour and character.

One can imagine the immeasurable pain caused to Guru Gobind Singh when he would have heard the news about the two Sahibzadas being tortured to death. And it is here that Guru Gobind Singh rises to those heights of character that are rarely ever witnessed in human history. There was not even one instance in his life where he had retaliated either himself by harming an uninvolved Muslim civilian

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or hinted about the need to retaliate this way to any of his followers. There must have been explosion ofanger amongst his followers against Wazir Khan but the high moral values the Guru had inculcated among his Sikhs acted as a powerful constraint against any unethical retaliatory behaviour against the family or relatives of Wazir Khan. No doubt, later on, Banda Bahadur led the attack on Sirhind and one of his commanders, also named Fateh Singh, killed Wazir Khan in one of the battles.

Even in the most hateful regimes, there are individuals who respond to the voice of their conscience. One such individual was Sher Mohammad Khan, the Nawab of Malerkotla, who protested against the death sentence pronounced on the young Sahibzadas in spite of the fact that his brother had been killed by Guru Gobind Singh's forces. He argued that his brother had died in a battlefield and the young Sahibzadas were totally innocent. That one brave act of kindness by the Nawab of Malerkotla has earned him a high place in history, and it is good that the Sikh community has never forgotten that humane intervention by the Nawab of Malerkotla.

Then there is the despicable character of Gangu Brahmin who had served the Guru's family for decades and at a crucial moment when Mata Gujri and the Sahibzadas took refuge in his house at his own request and then betrayed them to the local police leading to the arrest of Mata Gujri and Sahibzadas. His character shows how greed can lead human beings to the act of betrayal.

In contrast with Gangu Brahmin's act of betrayal, is the act of deep loyalty of Baba Moti Ram Mehra who displayed an exemplary character. He arranged to serve milk to Mata Gujari and the Sahibzadas in the Thanda Burj (Cold Fort) where they were imprisoned. When Wazir Khan came to know that Moti Ram Mehra had served milk to Mata Gujari and the Sahibzadas, he ordered his arrest along with that of his mother, wife and a very young son. Moti Ram Mehra defended his action as morally correct for which he along with whole family was tortured to death.

Similarly was the great character of Diwan Todar Mal who paid with gold coins the land for cremating the bodies of Mata Gujari and the Sahibzadas.

In our memory and historical texts, Wazir Khan and Gangu Brahmin are treated with contempt while we honour the young Sahibzadas and also Nawab of Malerkotla, Baba Moti Ram Mehra and Diwan Todar Mal. ❑

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The Impact of The Atlantic Charter (1941) On India's Independence

*Dr D S Grewal**

What was the 14 points charter of 1918 and Atlantic charter of 1941?Who were the signatories to these two? Why were these agreed to? What was the element of these two? What was the impact of these two? How did these help India's independence? These are the important questions which have studied and analyzed here.

The Fourteen pointswas a speech given by United States President Woodrow to a joint session of Congress on January 8, 1918. The Fourteen Points in the speech were based on the research of the Inquiry team of about 150 advisors led by foreign-policy advisor Edward M. house into the topics likely to arise in the anticipated peace conference.Wilson's speech on January 8,1918, took many of the principles of progressivism that had produced domestic reform in the U.S. and translated them into foreign policy (free trade, open agreements, democracy and self-determination. The Fourteen points speech was the only explicit statement of war aims by any of the nations fighting in World War 1.

The U.S. joined the Allies on April 6,1917. The speech was delivered 10 months before the Armistice with Germany and became the basis for the terms of the German surrender, as negotiated at the Paris peace Conference in 1919.[1] "Colonel" Edward M.House worked to secure the acceptance of the fourteen points by Entente Leaders. Sir William Wiseman was the chief of British Intelligence in 1915, On October 16, 1918, President Woodrow Wilson and William Wiseman sat down for an interview. This interview was one reason why the German government accepted the fourteen points and the stated principles for peace negotiations.

The report made as negotiation points, and later the fourteen points was accepted by France and Italy on November 1, 1918. Britain later signed off on all of the points except the freedom of the seas and the nations.

The 14 points were as under:

1. Open covenants of peace, openly arrived at, which there shall be no

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private international understandings of any kind but diplomacy shall proceed always frankly and in the public view.

2. Absolute freedom of navigation, outside territorial waters, alike in peace and in war,except as the seas may be closed in whole or in part by international action for the enforcement of international covenants.

3. The removal, so far as possible, of all economic barriers and the establishment of quality of trade conditions among all the nations to the peace and associating themselves for its maintenance.

4. Adequate guarantees given and taken that national armament to the lowest point consistent with domestic safety.

5. A free , open-minded, and absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims, based upon a strict observance of the principle that in determining all such questions of sovereignty the interests of the populations concerned must have equal weight with the equitable claims of the government whose title is to be determined.

6. The evacuation of all Russian territory and such a settlement of all questions affecting Russia as will secure the best and freest cooperation of the other nations of the world in obtaining for an unhampered and unembarrassed opportunity for the independent determination of her own political and national and assure her of a sincere welcome into the society of free nations under institutions of her own choosing; and, more than a welcome, assistance also of every kind that she may herself desire. The treatment accorded Russia by her sister nations in the months to come will be the acid test of their good will, of their comprehension of her needs as distinguished from their own interests, and of their intelligent and unselfish sympathy.

7. Belgium, the whole world will agree, must be evacuated and restored , without any attempt to limit the sovereignty which she enjoys in common with all other free nations.no other single act will serve to restore confidence among the nations in the laws which they have themselves set and determined for the government of their relations with one another. Without this healing the whole structure and validity of international law is forever impaired.

8. All French territory should be freed and the freed and invaded portions restored, and the wrong done to France by Prussia in in 1871 in the matter of Alsace-Lorraine, which has unsettled

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the peace of the world for nearly fifty years, should be righted, in order that peace may once more be made secure in the interest of all.

9. A readjustment of the frontiers of Italy should be effected along clearly recognizable lines of nationality.

10. The peoples of Austria-Hungary, whose place among the nations we wish to see safeguarded and assured, should be accorded the freest opportunity to autonomous development.

11. Romania, Serbia and Montenegro should be evacuated; occupied territories restored; Serbia accorded free and secure access to the sea; and the relations of the several Balkan states to one another determined by friendly counsel along historically established lines of allegiance and nationality; and international guarantees of the political and economic independence and territorial integrity of the several Balkan states should be entered into.

12. The Turkish portion of the present Ottoman Empire should be assured a secure sovereignty, but the other nationalities which are now under Turkish rule should be assured an undoubted security of life an absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous development, and the Dardanelles should be permanently opened as a free passage to the ships and commerce of all nations under international guarantees.

13. An independent polish state should be erected which should include the territories inhabited by indisputably polish populations, which should assured a free and secure access to the sea,and whose political and economic independence and territorial integrity should be guaranteed by international covenant.

14. A general association of nations must be formed under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike.

Summary

1. There should be no secret alliances between countries
2. Freedom of the seas in peace and war
3. The reduction of trade barriers among nations
4. The general reduction of armaments
5. The adjustment of colonial claims in the interest of the inhabitants as well as of the colonial powers
6. The evacuation of Russian territory and welcome for its government to the society of nations

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7. The restoration of Belgian in Germany
8. The evacuation of all French territory, including Alsace-Lorraine
9. The readjustment of Italian along clearly recognizable lines of nationality
10. Independence for various national groups in Austria-Hungary
11. The restoration of the Balkan nations free access to the sea for Serbia
12. Protection for minorities in Turkey and the free passage of the ships of all nations through the Dardanelles
13. Independence for Poland, including access to the sea
14. A league of nations to protect "mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great small nations alike."

Influence on the Germans to surrender

The speech was widely disseminated as an instrument of propaganda to encourage the Central powers to surrender in the expectation of a just settlement. Indeed, a note sent Wilson by prince Maximilian of Baden, the German imperial chancellor, in October 1918 requested an immediate armistice and peace negotiations on the basis of the fourteen points. The speech was made without prior coordination or consultation with Wilson's counterparts in Europe. As the only public statement of war aims, it became the basis for the terms of the German surrender at the end of the first World War. Wilson was awarded the 1919 Noble Peace prize, for his peace making efforts.

Impact of this treaty was that the USA came to help Great Britain. After the victory Woodrow Wilson put up 14 points programme which included the major elements as the total end of; every country was to have equal shipping rights on territorial waters; all the countries were to be considered equal and differences colour, creed, race were to be ended, As a result, the combined force helped in German defeat. However the British refused to act on point number 14

Relevance for India

Point 14 was very relevant for India since it talked of "mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small nation alike" and India should have been given the freedom under this clause.However, the British wanted to hold on to the colonies and backed out of the clause since it was not signed despite 14 point charter having been accepted in principal. As a result India was not freed. Woodrow Wilson felt insulted at not taking action at point 14.

As an effect, the American refused to side with Great Britain in Second World war. As the situation deteriorated in the Seconds World War; German took over over most of

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the European countries including Holland, Belgium, France etc.. German entered deep in to Russia. German ally Japan entered deep in to china. The British and its allies were losing all over. They again approached USA for help. The then USA President Franklin Roosevelt has very well remembered that Great Britain had not followed 14 point Charter presented by Woodrow Wilson in 1919. He had also put in writing that USA will not help Great Britain until an agreement is reached in writing before the entry of USA into war. The Allied were eager to agree to all the conditions in this time of dire necessity especially when all of them were facing annihilation. Seeing the situation favorable, Roosevelt put across the signing of Atlantic Charter as a precondition of USA before it helped allies.

The Atlantic Charter established a vision for a post-war settlement. The Atlantic Charter was drafted at the Atlantic Conference by British Prime Minister Churchill and U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt in New found land [2] It was issued as a joint declaration on 14 August 1941. It detailed the goals and aims of the Allied powers concerning the war and the post-war world. The main points of the charter were from the 14 points of 1918 war document. Since Britain had backed out on 14 points of 1918 document and Roosevelt was very adamant at enforcing those points; Churchill who was in very tight situation at the time had no other way than to accept become a signatory. Roosevelt's attempts to tie Britain to concrete war aims and Churchill's desperation to bind the U.S. to effort helped provide motivations for the meeting which produced the Atlantic Charter.[3] It was assumed at the time that Britain and America would have an equal role to play in any post war international organization that would be based on the principles of the Atlantic Charter.[4]

Joint Statement by President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill, August 14, 1941:

Joint declaration of the President of the United States of America and Prime Minister, Mr. Churchill, representing His Majesty's Government in the united Kingdom, being met together, deem it right to make certain common principles in the national policies of their respective countries on which they base their hopes for a better future for the world.[5]

First, their countries seek no aggrandizement, territorial or other;

Second, they desire to see no territorial changes that do not accord with the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned;

Third, they respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live; and they wish to see sovereign rights and self-government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them;

Fourth, they will endeavor, with due respect for their existing obligations, to

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further the enjoyment by all States, great or small, victor or vanquished, of access, on equal terms, to the trade and to the raw materials of the world which are needed for their economic prosperity;

Fifth, they desire to bring about the fullest collaboration between all nations in the economic field with the object of securing, for all, improved labor standards, economic advancement and social security;

Sixth, after the final destruction of the Nazi tyranny, they hope to see established a peace which will afford to all nations the means of dwelling in safety within their own boundaries, and which will afford assurance that all the men in all the lands may live out their lives in freedom from fear and went;

Seventh, such a peace should enable all men to traverse the high seas and oceans without hindrance;

Eighth, they believe that all of the nations of the world, for realistic as well as spiritual reasons must come to the abandonment of the use of force.Since no future can be maintained if land, sea or air armaments continue to be employed by nations which threaten, or may threaten, aggression outside of their frontiers, they believe, pending the establishment of a wider and permanent system of general security, that the disarmament of such nations is essential. They will likewise aid and encourage all other practicable measures which will lighten for peace-loving peoples the crushing burden of armaments. [6]

Signed by: Franklin D. Roosevelt & Winston S. Churchill

The eight principal points of the Charter were:

1. No territorial gains were to be sought by the United States or the United Kingdom;
2. Territorial adjustments must be in accord with the wishes of the peoples concerned;
3. All people had a right to Self-determination;
4. Trade barriers were to be lowered;
5. There was to be global economic cooperation and advancement of social welfare;
6. The participants would work for a world free of want and fear;
7. The participants would work for freedom of the seas;
8. There was to be disarmament of aggressor nations, and a postwar disarmament.

At the subsequent meeting of the Inter-Allied Council in St. James' Palace in London on 24 September 1941 , the governments of Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Greece, Luxemburg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and representatives of General Charles de Gaulle, leader of the Free French, unanimously adopted adherence to the common principles of policy set forth

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in the Atlantic Charter. On 1 January 1942, a larger group of nations, who adhered to the principles of the Atlantic Charter, issued a joint Declaration by United Nations stressing their solidarity in the defence against Hitlerism.[8] The agreement proved to be one of the first steps towards the formation of the United Nations.[9]

The problems came not from and Japan, but from those of the allies that had empires and which resisted self-determination—especially Britain, the Soviet Union and the Netherlands. Roosevelt's speechwriter Robert Sherwood noted that "it was not long before the people of India, Burma, and Indonesia were beginning to ask if the Atlantic Charter extended also to the Pacific and to Asia general. "With a war that could only be won with these allies, Roosevelt's solution was to put some pressure on Britain but to postpone until after the war the issue of self- determination of the colonies.[12]

Relevancy for India

The third point stated: **"Third,** they respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live; and they wish to see sovereign rights and self government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them. " It was thus mandatory that after the war; they would have vacate all colonies. In addition to this it ensured free global waters for shipping for all countries and elimination of all racial and color differences.

The acknowledgment that all peoples had a right to self-determination gave hope to independence leaders in British colonies (e .g., India),[10] Churchill rejected its universal applicability when it came to the self-determination of subject nations such as British India. MK Gandhi in 1942 wrote to president Roosevelt; "I venture to think that allied declaration that the allies are fighting to make the world safe for the freedom of the individual and for democracy sounds hollow so long as India and that matter Africa are exploited by Great Britain...[11] " Russia, Holland, France, China and France did not have much at stake as they had already lost all their influence. It was Great Britain which would lose the vast empire and was feeling reluctant. Roosevelt repeatedly brought the need for India independence to Churchill's attention, but was repeatedly rebuffed.[12] However Gandhi and his party refused to help either the British or the American war effort against Germany and japan in any way, leaving Roosevelt no choice but to back Churchill.[13] India eventually ended up contributing signifi-cantly to the war effort, sending over 2.5 million men (the largest volunteer force in the world at the time) to fight for the allies, mostly in West Asia and North Africa. [14] This helped Roosevelt to ask Churchill forcefully to free India. Finding no other way to get rid of the crucial situation; Britain too fell in line and signed the Charter. At the end of the war;

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the British, France and Dutch had to vacate all their colonies immediately after war and as a result India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Burma etc. got their independence.

In view of the credit of India's independence should go to Presidents Woodrow Wilson and Franklin Roosevelt. Not doing this, will be an insult to these two great men.

❑

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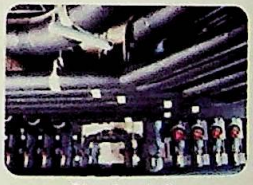
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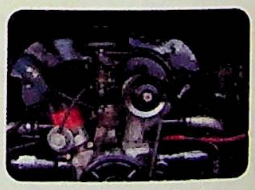




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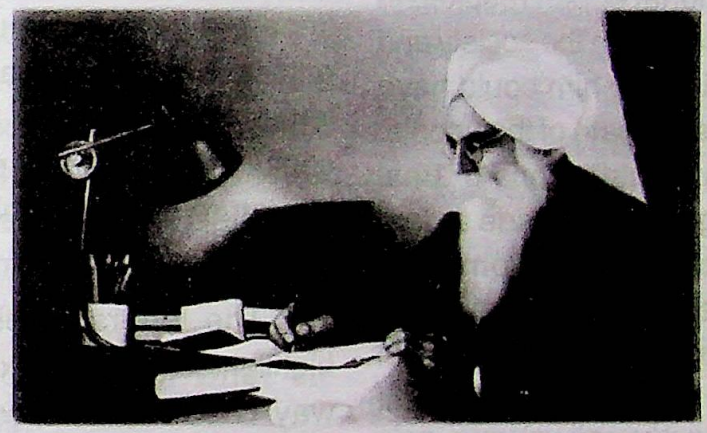
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Letters of Bhai Sahib Bhai Vir Singh Ji: A Guiding Light for the Posterity*

*Dr Harpreet Kaur**

Bhai Vir Singh - A Literary Colossus:

Bhai Sahib Bhai Vir Singh, a creative genius contributed profusely by compiling prolific literature. He was Padam Bhushan awardee in 1956. He is a well-known literary personality who gave a visible expression to his creative talent through a number of genres in his vast thought-provoking literature,which was ground breaking for a number of reasons.The tractarian literature complied by him presents an insightful view of the history of the Panth in form of stimulating 'historical fiction'. He was recognized as a school of thought during his lifetime, which is a rare honour conferred upon someone. He can indeed be considered as the 'Greatest Sikh' of the 20th century. "While there is no denying the fact that Bhai Vir Singh was and remains, the most influential Sikh scholar of the 20th century, a careful study of his study shows his concerns transcended beyond time and space. It is therefore important that Bhai Vir Singh, the greatest literary figure of his time is taken out of the 'temple of adoration' as 'Poet of the Sikhs' and projected as 'Poet of the Cosmos' with concerns beyond Sikh Identity". (Singh, Mohinder, 2017)



Times of Bhai Vir Singh:

Bhai Sahib Bhai Vir Singh led to widespread resurgence in Punjab in the epoch that saw the decline of the Sikh Rule with subsequent emergence of the British

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Rule. He wrote in an epoch marked by the pressures of the historical compulsions, political coercions, religious decline and social degeneration. The British through an organized strategy were trying to rout the Indian culture forcing Indians to give up practices of their own native culture and imposing the foreign culture slowly and steadily upon them. This was gradually drifting the masses from our rich cultural legacy. This transitional epoch resulted in many negative influences in the society and only a literary genius like him could have corrected the digressed path of the people. One of the biggest contributions of Bhai Sahib BhaiVir Singh was he made ardent efforts to bring out people from their parochial attitude by making our rich traditions and cultural heritage relevant in his times. The parameters of human conduct were defined in the light of Gurbani and the people were reinvigorated to face the trails and tribulations of their lives with the spiritual guidance.

Bhai Sahibs's Literary Genius:

The contribution of Bhai Sahib Bhai Vir Singh to the treasure trove of the Punjabi literature has been commendable. He has penned down in various genres with equal ease and competency including, Biographies of the Gurus, Chamatkar, drama, novels, short poems, prose, epics, pamphlets etc. The vast reservoir of literature written by him had a special bent towards creating and retaining the Sikh identity and bringing about reformism in the degeneration that had set in the Sikh culture.

One of the genres used by him was in the form of letters and correspondences, which gave a visible expression to his creative talent in a style that is distinctive and deviates from the forms of the available literature that are not frequently used. Till 20th century, the letters had a prime importance in communicating with the relatives, friends and acquaintances. The letters of Baba Ram Singh in the 18th century have a special place in the Punjabi Literature before Bhai Vir Singh with a similar connotation.

The letters of Bhai Vir Singh are highlighted for being exceptional in its own way. These letters were written as a frequent correspondence with his near relatives and friends wherein he is making an effort to explicate them their life contexts, however bitter these might be. The beauty of the preaching contained in the letters is that it comes out of the narrow arena of the life contexts specific to a person and can be reiterated in a larger context that transcends time and space disseminating higher objectives of life to the people at large. Hence, his letters differ from the ordinary letters to have a serious implication providing an insightful opinion to the people.

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The central focus that emerges from the heart of the letters is the tradition of Gursikhi. Bhai Sahib imparts the philosophy contained in Gurbani to the devotees and prepares them to meet the problems of their daily lives. The theoretical and practical concepts contained in Gurbani provide respite to people who were afflicted with the problems and provide a balance in the human character based on the ideals laid by the Gurus. It becomes preaching for the answers provided by him in the letters influences one to mould one's mental outlook on the basis of serious intent mentioned in it and helps them to solve the actualities and practical problems of life based on the ideal teachings of Gurbani.

Important Features of Bhai Vir Singh's Discourses:

The 'Practice of Letters' was an integral part of the life of Bhai Vir Singh despite his commitments in varied pursuits. These letters contain doubts and apprehensions of the devotees pertaining to many real time issues. The letters of Bhai Sahib have been written as an answer to his close acquaintances, relatives and friends in light of the Teachings of the Gurus. He would maintain a constant communication with his aficionados who would discuss their personal problems seeking his mature and subtle guidance on various important facets of life. There is continual dialogue with the person and the imbalance in the distorted mentalities of the people is corrected through responsive answers from Gurbani.

Bhai Sahib Bhai Vir Singh in his discourses addresses the person reading the letter in the initial few lines to bring out the natural dichotomy in him and makes him aware of the dichotomies faced during the lifetime by a person from the birth to death. The dichotomies are attached with the precepts of Gurbani. The solution of the problems recommended by him all through is to change the mental outlook of the people that the Gurus had done in Medieval Punjab.

These letters become a preaching because Bhai Sahib would not only, provide spiritual guidance to them keeping in mind their life contexts as a religious teacher but also, pray for them to come out of difficult situations. Bhai Vir Singh presents in his letters an essence of the ideals of Gurbani imbibed in his personality and so, his letters despite being solution to the practical problems becomes effectual form of a preaching. He gives reasoning supporting the philosophical intent of the message. The way to lead pristine life has been elaborated by Bhai Sahib. One has to be engrossed in the Almighty, which would make positive changes in the outlook of a person making one pure, clean and pristine. The life actions of a person should be imbued with the teachings of Gurbani and the Sikh Rahit

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Maryada outlined within its parameters. The realm of *meditation of the God and everyday human conduct are interwoven very closely* with each other in a dynamic process. The main precept outlined by him is that one should dwell in the presence of God leading one's life humbly and virtuously. His teachings take us towards universalism and weave the diversities into an essential unity that permeates within the supremacy of the omnipresent and benevolent God.

The human life is a priceless gift of the Bountiful Master to be lived with all its compulsions. "What more should I write to you. I understand a premise and remind you again and again if we are born in the world, this body has to be treated with some rules like,

- Keep it pure.
- Serve the people close to you and around you who are under the sanctuary of God.
- Keep the mind under control and be thoughtful.
- Keep your thoughts under the refuge of God.
- Remember God with a poised and happy mind and never be sad, impatient, disturbed, angry and troubled. Be happy always and meditate in peace".

(Vir Pattravali, 2016)

The path ordained by Gurbani has been recommended to control the five evils and baser instincts of men like, enmity, attachment, hoarding, dualities, jealousies, hatred etc. that are obstacles in the path of consciousness. The realm of virtues if adopted by a person will help him to move towards the 'Ultimate Reality'. God's Name is to be inculcated in the body and mind of a person. The mind of a person gets stagnated if person loses connection with God by not remembering Him and emancipation is possible through absorbed meditation. The doors of our mind should be open for Waheguruto enable the blowing spiritual breeze enter our mind forever. He has suggested the concepts of Nam, Hukum and Simran from the Sikh maryada as a solution to the worldly problems. Sadh Sangat or the company of holy persons, Path, Kirtan or Katha of Sri Guru Granth Sahib in Gurdwaras and Gurdhams etc. bring solace to a person and guide him to tread on the correct path.

Bhai Vir Singh is naturally effortless in the letters to disseminate the tenets of Sikhi even while producing very profound and organized written literature. The pearls of wisdom written by Bhai Sahib were so precious for the devotees that they would preserve these letters with them. So, these letters become idealistic letters charting a way for the humanity. Bhai Vir Singh urges

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the adherents not to follow the traditions of Sikhi blindly but espouses it as an intellectual who integrates faith, prayers and knowledge to give a practical shape applicable in the human life.

Long-lasting Impact of the Preaching contained in the Letters

Bhai Sahib Bhai Vir Singh wrote in turbulent times and laid grounds for the cultural transformation in Punjab. Gurbani became the process through which Punjabi culture was formed. His writings strongly reasserted Sikhi and a new energy was infused into Punjabis encouraging them to lead life with this renewed vigour based on spirituality. The Singh Sabha Movement played a vital role in the resurgence of the declining Sikh traditions and culture and Bhai Vir Singh can be considered as 'a product as well as the leading light of the movement'. At the end of the 20th century, Bhai Sahib Bhai Vir Singh also made this unique tradition of *Sikhi* as his foundation stone bringing about much required resurgence.The Sikhi principles were preached at the apparent dynamic level applicable in the daily lives of the people. Gurbani became an eye-opener for the people for it defines, interprets and circumscribes the standards for an ideal human conduct. The preaching in the letters transforms a fallible individual into an ideal person in the light of Gurbani. The realm of Nam and Sabad is suggested as a way to create an ideal balance of his character and as the way for enlightenment in the transcendental world.

The Legacy Preserved for the Posterity

Bhai Vir Singh Sahit Sadan, Delhi is making consistent efforts to preserve and disseminate the vast literature compiled by him for the benefit of the avid readers. The efforts of Sadan has been laudable in collecting the letters and publishing it with the titles namely, *Hamdardi Pattar of Bhai Sahib, Vir Pattrawali and Vir Sonehade* for the benefit of the readers.

Different letters emphasize different aspects of the life situations and the problems faced by people. The letters contained in book, *Hamdardi Pattar* are letters written after the demise of some near one unfolding the grief emerging from such an untimely demise and recommending the correct path in even such a heart-rending situation. Bhai Sahib is telling the way to come out of the situation of grief taking inspiration from the perianal source of wisdom adorned in Gurbani. The handbook, *Vir Pattrawali* contains the letters of Bhai Sahib written to his close acquaintances, devotees and relatives who are discussing varied problems of their life with him. Bhai Vir Singh has employed the vision contained in Gurbani to solve the uncertainties of the

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daily lives. In the third book namely *Paire Ji*, Bhai Sahib gives a prescription to meet the situation of the declining health in light of Gurbani, which purges mind and hence, the body becomes free of all ailments. This not only, articulates the creative genius of Bhai Vir Singh but also, contains the pearls of wisdom reflecting true *Sikhi* in the express and dynamic forms so that it can be spread for the benefit of the humanity. This endeavour of Bhai Vir Singh Sadan to publish the unpublished letters in the form of books has widened its scope for the present generation as well as for the posterity.

Summing Up

So, Bhai Sahib Bhai Vir Singh can be aptly called as an highly enlightened individual infused with the spirit of Gurbani with an unflinching commitment to it and all through his literary compositions, he has made ardent efforts to present the bearing of Gurbani on the human conduct, thereby having a lasting impact on transforming the society. Our rich repository of Gurbani, Sikh culture and Sikh ideals of life shape his complete vision and practice. Bhai Vir Singh has employed the vision contained in Gurbani to solve the uncertainties of the daily lives. The people, at large can take guidance in the intricate and complicated life situations and the preaching in the light of Gurbani can help them to purge from all evils and come out of the challenging situations. The people can improve the visible world as well as transcendental world through the pearls of wisdom contained in the series of these letters reflecting true Sikhi in the express and dynamic forms. Moreover, the vision outlined in the letters is so comprehensive and inclusive that it embraces the entire humanity in its fold and people across all religions can take guidance from it to conduct their life activities.

His inspirational writings including the letters penned down by him have long-lasting bearing and can be read, comprehended and assimilated in our lives for leading an elevated life. □

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Introducing the Master Artist: Phulan Rani

*SHUBHANI**

Abstract:

This research paper is about the Punjabi artist Phulan Rani. Phulan Rani is considered as the master of water color paintings as her paintings are often described as the poetry of the sight. She was born in a Punjabi family and one of the important 20th century woman artist from Punjab. She is essentially a poet who, instead of words, used the medium of line and colour to portray the emotional impact on mind of beauty of nature and of human form.

Keywords:

Contemporary, Water color, Poetry, Imagery, Medium, Nature, Human form, Emotions.

Early Life and Education

Phulan Rani was born in 1928 in Amritsar. She belonged to a well to do Sikh family. Her mother died when she was an infant. Her father Ram Singh was a doctor. She showed a great interest in fine arts, particularly for painting and dancing. Dr. Ram Singh encouraged and nourished his daughter with deep and discerning paternal care and pride. In her biography she writes, "My life really began when I started painting at thirteen. I have wonderful memories of that period making pencil drawings on the margins of the school books, attempting to draw sketches of persons and things that interested me." (Phulan Rani - Biography n.d.) She did not receive any formal training in art, but her education is in Liberal Arts and Psychology. She sought to quintessence and watched other painters at work and slowly trained herself often working late into night. She followed the dictates of her inner urge even when in conflict with external necessity. She devoted most of her time to creative pursuits sometimes even at the expense of pressing her academic demands.

Personal Life

Phulan Rani got married to S. Shamsher Singh in 1944. Her husband was also a person of great literary taste and had special love for fine arts. Together they

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raised a family and participated in the worlds of arts and letters in Punjab. They ran the New Modern High School in Amritsar, and Phulan taught art as well. Her Father-in-law Kartar Singh Bumra too had a interest in painting. After her marriage when Phulan Rani made a painting, Kartar Singh Bumra was much impressed with it and he encouraged her with a cash prize of Rs. 100 and also presented her a book. She was happily married and in the new atmosphere to which great Kerala poet, Maha Kavi Sankara G. Kurup, referred in one of his letters addressed to her as "your happy home where poetry and art lead a blissful wedded life."

Career

Phulan Rani started to paint at the age of thirteen. She had wonderful memories of that period making pencil drawings on the margins of school books. Phulan Rani genius received an encouragement in the Simla Fine Art Exhibition held in 1948, her water color painting "The Dancer", done in wash style, bagged the first prize. Again in 1953, in the Silver Jubilee Fine Arts Exhibition of the Indian Academy of Fine Arts, Amritsar, presided over by Dr. Rajendra Prasad, her well known work, "Twin Sisters Day and Night", received a gold medal and her two other exhibits " Memory and Moonlight" and " Wayside Rest" were widely acclaimed and celebrated. (Tampy 1981). These paintings express the Punjabi spirit in its tender purity.

Her activities associated with her position as the head of High School and as member of numerous social and literary organizations, she began to work day in, day out to relieve her teeming brain of its images which she translated on paper or on canvas with all her brilliance and child like freshness and vision, imagination and technical virtuosity and providing onlooker the visual delight and aesthetic satisfaction. Her works are so many lyrics in color revealing beneath the physical aspect of things the creative spirit that animates them. She is a painter of varied rich spiritual experiences and even in her maturity she has retained the freshness of vision which is the special property of children and poets.

In 1955 she visited Kangra Valley and that brought her into the close contact with the beauty of nature in its pristine splendor- its lush green terraced rice fields, its turbulent mountain streams, its dashing waterfalls and the endless ranges of the distant hills fading into the blue mist had a great impact on her mind of riotous carnival of beauty turned her overnight into a landscape painter of exquisite sensibility and she started painting the eternally varying moods of this wonderful valley and its subtly evasive colors. Her landscapes are categorized by a keen eye for beauty and deep understanding of the intracacies of color and composition. (K.Singh 1962 october 21, the tribune) In later years Phulan Rani in Amritsar and Sanat Kumar Chatterjee in Simla continued

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to paint in wash technique. Phulan Rani used the "wash" technique for melting colors to provide a romantic, poetic and emotional content to her works. (Parimoo 2009) Within the course of next five years she painted hundreds of landscapes depicting the charm of the valley and an exhibition of these impressive works were organised at Amritsar in 1962 and it was inaugrated by the Speaker of Lok Sabha. Her paintings "Waterfall at Bhavarna", "MacchialKund in the Evening," "Nohra Richard's Cottage" and "The sunset at Tatehal" are outstanding for their lyrical appeal and mastery over medium of water color. Her love for nature is her love of flowers and her flower studies are among the finest.

During her cultural trip to Europe in 1970 in connection with concerts entitled "Indian Ragas through Music and Painting" at the universities and cultural organizations, she organized exhibitions of her flower paintings; and to the British, a nation of flower lovers, her exhibits made a direct appeal and many of her flower studies were acquired by private collectors and art connoisseurs. Her flower studies " A wild Rose Bush" and "Flowers in conch shell", which, though as subject seem very modest reveal her attitude to the world of nature.

Rani also held solo exhibitions in different cities of India like Poona, Bombay, Kanpur, Ranchi, Calcutta and Chandigarh and won acclaim on account of artistic excellence of her works, their graceful and tender purity of color of which "Strength and Grace" and "Wayside Rest" are admirable examples.

Subject matter

Rani did a series of flower studies, landscape scenes and life drawings. She also did works on domestic genre, she devoted herself entirely to such lyrically themes as "The Bride", "The Heart Broken" and "The Afflicted." The Afflicted being one of her greatest paintings and on which she worked for four years.

During the Birthday celebrations of Guru Gobind Singh she was commissioned by Guru Gobind Singh Foundation, Patiala, to paint the whole life of Master in thirty paintings which she did in record time. Again during the Birth-day celebrations of Guru Nanak, in 1969, her pictorial biography of the great Guru won her an award of Rs. 1000/ from President ShriV.V.Giri. This book has been translated into English Braille for the benefit of the visually handicapped and has since been distributed among such centers all over the world. Her pictorial biography of GuruTeghBahadur, painted in the same strain, was selected for award by Punjab Govt. for being the best book of the year 1976-77. Major episodes of Sikh Guru's life have been rendered with stately tenderness and compositional skill. (Singh.Nikky-Guninder 2011)

She also painted a series of love legends like "The desert of Manju", Sassi

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of the Sorrows", "Mirza Sahiban", "The Lure of His Flute". Her nobly conceived and admirably rendered paintings like "The Poet", "Time and Beauty", "The Poet and the Muses", "Meghdoot" and "The Great Singers" are filled with the spirit of high romance and together with her Raga paintings.

Portraiture also received a considerable share of her attention and in the extensive gallery of portraits. She go into the inner world of her subject and brings out all that is best and beautiful in it. Portraits of " Saint Ravidas", "Rishi Valmik" located at the Municipal Corporation Hall, Amritsar, "Guru Nanak" in Air India Office, San Francisco; "Guru Gobind Singh" in Sikh Temple, Manchester and "Galib" in the collection of N.S. Virdi. Her technical skills in modifying tone in subtlest gradations from light to dark distinguish her portraits from work of other artists.

Besides her contribution to the art of painting, her work in juvenile literature is no less substantial, having authored about a score books on a wide variety of themes, ranging from art, science, classics, morals and biographies. Two of her books, namely "Paudayan-da-jiwan(Life of Plants)", " Germ-ate-Asin (Germs and We)" have received state awards. (Tampy 1981)

Works:

- Two Sisters Day and Night - Water color

In this painting two sisters are shown together as Day and Night and forming a unit with which one can measure the length of our mundane existence. Here she is allegorically representing the twin sisters joined in eternal union. Artist views life as a poet and this painting is clear example of underlying poetry of her thought and vision. Artist beautifully uses metaphors. Day with its activity and struggle and night with its dreamy stillness and calmness, both fused into a harmonious union, like the two different aspects of self-same reality. The two colors representing Day and Night equally share their victory over life, and merging beautifully into each other. Day infused with beautiful golden light, brightly attired holding flowers in her hand which is symbolic of liveliness, beauty and growth and Night on the other hand is depicted with mysteriously enchanting, scattering its wealth of starry pearls and silver of moonlight and inducing dreams and visions of beauty into the life patterns. Her mastery over watercolors and linear element is clearly visible in her work. Picture was painted beautifully with brilliancy of color.

This painting was awarded gold medal for being one of the best exhibits in Silver Jubilee exhibit of the Indian Academy of Fine Arts at Amritsar, in 1953 presided by President Dr. Rajendra Prasad.

- **Ragini Sohni – Water color**

This is from her Raga Ragini series. A woman in her early twenties is shown

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delicately seated in the walled serenity of her barely furnished room. She is shown writing letter to her lover. Her posture is meditatively inclined and is busy gathering her thoughts and views before putting them in ink. Expression of sadness is beautifully conveyed. Her sadness proceeds from the long absence of her lover. She is shown wearing a golden robe like that of a Yogini. Figure is characterized with purest transparency of complexion, intensity and expression. There is some strong force in the application of color. Only source of light is the night lamp. Artist used very rich harmonious hues and figure is used as a vehicle to express mood and depth of emotions.

- **His Last Solace – Water color**

Shah Jahan, ruler of mighty Mughal empire remains the central figure of this painting. This theme has been painted by many artists. Shah Jahan is shown in his old age and shown gazing towards Taj. Shah Jahan looks out from the place of his captivity in the Red Fort, Agra, shown very sad and pathetic and gazing towards the monument that he had raised for the Glory of Love and Loveliness. The princess and her daughter Jahan Ara, the only solace of his declining years looks sad and helpless at the unveiling sorrow of her royal father, while Taj almost lost hidden in the haze of dim distance, seems equally helpless. The artist beautifully portrayed the theme with wonderful realism.

- **Flowers in a conch Shell: Flower Series–Water color**

This is her one of the most well-known painting from flower series. In this subject seems simple and modest but portrayed beyond superficial simplicity. Deep poetic content is present in this painting and also lyrically warm attitude to the world. The composition, the choice of angle, dynamic rhythm provokes the feeling of liveliness and the connection of picture with life. The painting suggests spring and of eternal revival of life and it is beautifully symbolized in yellows and blues. It speaks of joy that artist feels and gives vivid feeling of life and its purpose.

Exhibitions

- **1946** – First prize for "The Dancer" at exhibition in Shimla.
- **1953** – Received gold medal at the Silver Jubilee exhibit of the Indian Academy of Fine Arts at Amritsar, for her painting "Twin Sisters: Day and Night."
- **1960-65** – Exhibition of landscapes at Amritsar. Exhibitions at Poona, Bombay and Kolkata. The Poona exhibit included 150 Kangra Valley paintings. These include "Waterfall near Bharvana," "Waterfall at Andretta," and "Road Through Rice Fields."

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Memorials Erected – even as Historical Heritage are Erased !

*Bhupinder Singh (Houston, TX)**

Many a times when I read Gurbani, I wonder about the situation, circumstances and place the very words I am reading, were uttered by Guru Sahib. Even when we do find such a historical evidence, we come out empty handed as those evidences have not been either recorded, preserved, or many of those locations have limited functionality and accessibility as they are now "Evacuee Property" in Pakistan. But, when I heard about the place where Guru Gobind Singh Ji composed the Bani of Chaupai Sahib, I always wanted to visit the place known Vibhaur Sahib. I was blessed with the opportunity to visit this auspicious place, 18 kilometers from Anandpur Sahib on 24 October 2016. This place besides being auspicious as Guru Ji stepped on it,thus having Guru Ji's "**Charan choh**" also has an added significance as the bani of Chaupai Sahib was composed by Guru Ji during his stay here. While returning back to Anandpur after the battle of Bhagani, Guru Ji spent few months here.

The composition starts as a supplication that asks for blessings and protection from God. Then Guru Ji prays that may all my desires be fulfilled, and obtain God's Love and Mediation. The heart's desire is that my heart may be at your feet, and you nurture me as your own. This bani is truly significant as it is part of our daily prayer and also part of banis recited during preparation of Amrit. This bani is a supplication to Almighty, yet one can feel that Guru Ji is having heart to heart conversation with God. The words coming out of Guru Ji's mouth are a word portrait of state of his mind. Now, if we can add the natural environment and the surrounding ambience that spawned that state of mind, it takes us into ecstasy. Fortunately for us we can go there and touch the rocks, hills, leaves, trees on the banks of river Sutlej, that have the privilege of being the environment that created that unique composition. Additionally by going there we can also breathe that same mountain air that gave birth to Chaupai Sahib and it still permeates in that air.

The natural beauty, the pristine mountain air, the undulating hills and valleys

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makes the jaw drop in awe and wonder. The spell binding natural beauty calms the mind, sooths the nerves. Only one question kept popping in my head, where is the spot Guru Ji sat on and wrote this magnificent composition? How was the weather that Sunday (as detailed by Guru Ji) like, when these words of prayers poured out by Guru Ji like the flowing Sutluj. Imagine the meditative pose of Guru Ji, the cool breeze blowing, the leaves fluttering and with a pen in hand Guru Ji is having a conversation with God. Then, Guru Ji concluded the composition with these words "***All this I write with your blessing. This is not what I know but what you have shown me.***" The curiosity and inquisitiveness to witness the serenity of the spot turned into disappointment, when I discovered that the special spot has been dazed to ground in the name of befitting memorial. So, in the name of creation of a memorial the serenity, auspiciousness, natural beauty, historical land marker has been destroyed and replaced with brick, cement, concrete and marble edifice.



CHAUPAI

Sambat satrh sahis bheNije.
ardh sahis phun teen kaheje.
Bhadrrav sudee ashtmee ravivaraa.
Teer sat-drav granth sudaahraa. (29)

MEANING:

It was Bikrami Samvat 1753 (September 14, 1696); This book was competed on the banks of Sutlej on Sunday, the eighth Sudi of the month of Bhaadro.

Most Gurudwara buildings look-alike, in terms of architectural concept, facade and appearance. While the efforts of organizations and individuals spearheading the efforts to build a fitting memorial in the midst of mountains are really appreciated, but it pains my heart to say that we have robbed history from our future generation. Where a visit could turn back the time, taking us to the times of Guru Sahib, has now become a visit to one more Gurudwara, a look a like but with a historical association. The pain was deeply felt in the heart as to why are we robbing ourselves of our own

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history? Just the thought of us robbing our own future generation brought the tears down my cheek. We cannot blame anybody else for the permanent loss that we are creating, in name of marble and gold edifice. We as a community have a collective failure in preserving and nurturing our history. We have failed our future generations. The piece of history that could inspire generations, fire the flames of faith has now become just another Gurudwara building. Sometimes the structural integrity of the original may be in jeopardy or the structure may be in a severely ruined that the original cannot be salvaged. In such a situation an exact replica using suitable construction material and the building techniques of the times can be employed, thus history preserved.



If we look at the deeds of Gurus, we can see that they not only preserved their own bani, but also compiled it in a fashion that it cannot be altered and is preserved for ever. Yet, we as the followers of the Gurus cannot even preserve the spots where it was created. Our Gurus are builders of cities, townships, communities, and we cannot even preserve the spots associated with our Gurus. Are we really followers of our Gurus? Our Gurus have uttered bani in different situations, different place and addressed varied issues/subjects. Alas, we hardly have any historical evidence of the place and the context in which the particular bani was uttered.

The painful part is wherever we have a solid historical evidence of situation and place the bani was uttered, we have tempered and destroyed that legacy and evidence. Our history is only 550 years old, yet we have failed preserve it. Every place associated with a confirmed historical setting has been decimated and replaced with Gurudwara building of marble and gold. It is undoubtedly a reflection of reverence, faith and desire to preserve the legacy. Yet

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when we visit these places, we feel the vacuum created by the loss of historical evidence and legacy. Most of these edifices are lacking the touch of local construction material of the times that was part of the historical legacy. Today, we can visit these historical places but the memorials are relatively a new construction and they do not convey the historical relevance or share the history with us. The marble and gold that are enshrined there, have taken over the historical evidence. The plants, trees, soil, rocks and the topography that witnessed the history, are not there anymore. These may not talk, yet they can convey a lot to the pilgrims and tourists, which has now been deprived. As the experience that they absorbed then, if kept alive would have been conveyed to us portrait of those times. That transmission of the portraits would have enriched our experience there and would have nurtured our commitment and growth. Alas!We have inflicted upon ourselves enough damage in terms of lost historical legacy and destroyed relics which can't be replaced.

It is truly a sad commentary on the psyche of the Sikhs, who have failed to preserve the history associated with their Gurus. We can start from the birth place of our first Guru in Nanakana Sahib to the resting place of tenth Guru in Nanded and we cannot find any historical relics left. We can extend further the sad legacy to include the four Sahibzades of Guru Gobind Singh.

The others will always try to rob us of our legacy, but when we have also contributed and have made part of lost legacy, whom should be blame? Sadly! We do not have anybody else to blame. It is time for us to wake up and change our psyche and approach on modernization and preservation of historical places. May be we need to take our custodians of Gurudwara construction to visit some historical cities like Rome to make it an eye-opening experience on how the legacy is preserved. Let us not destroy the historical evidence and geographical flavor in the name of befitting memorial. There is room for both to co-exist, where the preservation and modernization can complement each other. The befitting memorial is welcome addition but it should not be over decimated historical evidence.

Moving forward when we create a befitting memorial,there the central piece and attraction should be the historical. There are many museums around the world where the settings are modern yet the history has been preserved or recreated as an exact replica of the times. The flavor of the times has been recaptured for enriching our experience of the visit to the place. Let us change our approach and become preserver of history and not those who over saw the destruction of historical evidence. It is about time to change our roles from those who oversaw tearing down of history, to those who preserved the history. □

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The Sikh Thought : A Gentle, if Awe inspiring Integration of Body and Mind

*K S Ahluwalia**

The concept of Freedom is absolute, total not limited, chained or restricted. The Sikh ethos exalts me to experience – and immerse in – the ultimate freedom; in fact it longs for it. A state where I am alone, yet not lonely. Where I am totally solitary, and yet do not feel the absence of other. Where I am alone, yet so whole that there is no trace of the need for another to fulfil me. A state where I am contained not constrained, in my being, where my being becomes the whole. This is the longing of man that is hidden in his deepest, innermost core!

All misery is the outcome of having boundaries, of being limited. That I am not the whole: that, I am incomplete, and so many things are needed for me to be fulfilled. And even if all the requirements are met and all things attained, I still remain unfulfilled, my incompleteness continues.

Hence those who have searched deeply have felt that the man will not experience bliss as long as any of his needs are dependent on others. And as long they are, misery will continue unabated. No bliss ever comes in dependence. If one has to distil the essence of all his miseries, the cause would be no more than dependence. And the ultimate essence of bliss is freedom.

Here the 'I' does not exist, ones individual existence disappears, dissolves and only existence remains. When I say 'I ' am, I have to use two words I and am. The moment I disappear then only am ness remains. Only I am means that everything, all, that is contained in me. The whole sky is within me, the moon and stars, all move within me. Words are created, dissolved within me. This 'I' has expanded and become one with the cosmos. This 'I' has become the Khalsa, the ultimate reality.

The Sikh ethos is a search for this ultimate freedom, an inquiry, an exploration into the path of this inquiry. And it begins with a prayer, not effort, and that's very meaningful.

Our search isn't going to be quenched by effort, yet effort is required. The search is so vast, so mammoth that one simply would go astray, get lost. It's like a prisoner who decides to search for freedom; as one chained, dependent, searches for open sky.

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A goal that is too huge for his limited capacity. If his capacity wasn't limited, he wouldn't have been a prisoner, not in jail at all. Then no one could chain him, make him dependent, shackled him. He is weak, limited, dependent and that's why in prison.

Being in prison is a statement of my limitations. Hence nothing will be possible through my efforts alone. If it was then I would not be in the present state

Yet I need not to give up, accept the status quo, be destiny oriented, complacent, go to sleep, give up, be hopeless, believe that no power can free me. I exist and perish in limitations.

I need to be free from all that is holding me, constraining me, limiting me, making me dependent. Yet alone it's a gigantic task. What I need here is support, guidance, hand holding, coaching, mentoring, which is available when I invoke the power of one greater than myself. Hence prayer is mandated.

Prayer for me means ' You do it for me, you help me, you hold my hand, you pull me out, and after doing so I fall back to sleep, leave things on him and just relax. This isn't going to help. Prayer is needed, but it's not enough. Effort is a must, yet it s not enough. Both need to be integrated seamlessly, making a lethal combination, where the seemingly impossible is made possible.

Prayer is an ongoing continuous effort and so is the effort.

- It means ' I ' invoke the help of existence and effort means ' I am ready to go with existence and cooperate with it'.
- Means ' You pick me up', while effort means' Whatever energy I have for getting up, I will use all of it'.
- Implies ' I won't be able to get up on my own strength, you are needed. Effort means' unless I want to get up. How can even your grace pick me up. Hence I will get up, I will stand on my own feet and I will try to break these chains- yet I know I am weak and nothing is possible without your help.

Consequently prayer is very unique, novel, perplexing, puzzling and even worrisome.

Sikh ethos is not information overload, collecting pleasant sounding words, converting them into jargons, complex statements such that they simply fly over my head. In fact it simplifies, demystifies all complexities, converts them into simple actionable plans. Its starts with me choosing and not deciding things, being responsible for all that what's happening with me. Owning up, not pregnating excuses, being in the centre, not running away. It talks about integration not either or. Thus need to use wisely all resources optimally, rationally, not flittering them away.

A sound healthy body is the first step to a healthy mind and thus the journey incepts.

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Sikh ethos doesn't degrade, deplore the sense organs, treat them as vices, blames my shortcomings upon them. In the search of the ultimate the first step is to strengthen my sensory organs, that they be nourished, strengthened. Not weaken them, not suppress them, repress them.

A thought in tangent, contrary to the most believed assumption of repression, suppression.

The underlying thought is that ' Lord give strength to my sense organs, may my eyes bye strengthen, my ears, my tongue, be strengthened, my sense organs to grow and be nourished'. The moot point is that there exist no divisions; no divorce between the divine and the world, both co exist together, in harmony. If they were at logger heads one would have destroyed the other, long ago.

The sense organs and the soul aren't opposed to one another. There exists no duality in nature. The divine and the world aren't two things; the divine that comes within the grasp of my sense organs I name them as ' the world' and the divine that doesn't come within the grasp of your sense organs I name it as ' divine'.

Sikh ethos is saying a remarkable prayer'. Its stressing that' right now I ask for the other part of the prayer- that you enter my experience from within me- that will be the asking for too much. Right now, I pray for my sense organs- through which you come into my perception even a little in the form of the world- should go strong.

I pray that you become available to me, all around me, in the world itself. I pray that my eyes grow so strong that when I look at a tree, not only will I see the tree but I will also see you throbbing, growing inside it. And when my ears hear someone speak, I pray that they hear not only the words that come from the mouth but also the soundless, which is always there beyond the words. And I pray that when my hands touch someone, then, as well as touching the body, my fingers may also touch the one that is hidden within the body.

For this, strengthen my sense organs nourish them, evolve them, sensitize them.

Fact: The more sensitive, alive a person's senses are, the more he will begin to feel and see glimpses of the deeper reality that is hidden within life. Amusingly , we are killing our senses, degrading them, criticizing them, suppressing them, and in turn are turning more aggressive, more repressive, more fanatical, more inhuman, more mechanical, more transactional, more obsessed, more command and control oriented. Consequently more fractured, fragmented, argumentative, dejected.

Reflect: what am I saying to the divine' No matter how much I try, I cannot see you in this world. So then I blind my eyes, deafened my hearing, make all sensory organs feeble, weak, dry them up - and I only search for the divine inside you'.

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Pitiable. Laughable is this thought and endeavour.

Reality: what I could not find even on the outside- which was a lot easier, will I be able to find it within. Moreover, what I divide into outer and inner, are they really two?

The sky that is outside my house is it different from the one within my house. The breath I inhale and the one I exhale are they different. What permeates inside me, and what is everywhere outside me, are they really two. And there is such a vast expanse ousted of me- if I am blind to it and I cannot see it, will I be able to discover the tiny part within me.

Hence Lord first strengthen my senses, make them powerful so that through them I can experience what I cannot perceive when my senses are weak. It's a courageous prayer, conceived in moment of strength, not weakness. It's not treading the oft used path, convenient, safe, comfortable. Its beyond- charting a new course, writing anew. It's courageous, dangerous as it involves new thinking, new flights, new ideas.

There is nothing as who knows, what I would do. No should, world, could. No fencing. It's now and beyond. Its taking action in the now. It's being responsible. It's being celebrative, joyous, total and in totality. Nothing unfamiliar exists. No fear of anything or everything, no need to drop, no escaping, no shrinking of soul.

Its renunciation by the strong and powerful who by their own choosing renounce all that they feel to be worthless. The other renunciation is by the weak, who give up helplessly whatever they can't confront with or is more powerful than them.

Powerful men rejoice in giving away, feel victories, in control feeling, while weak ones sheepishly part, a feeling of despondency arises in them. Victim syndrome. Powerful men renounce as they are ready to experience in a deeper experience, they have gained insights, are capable of closing their outer eyes. They have opened the door to an inner experience, hence no more dependency on outer senses.

Weaklings close their eyes due to fear, their thought being that their souls would be polluted if they see any beauty, afraid that their self control will disappear if they touch, their minds will waiver if they hear a sweet voice. Weak people have renounced their senses while strong ones have shed away all that which was now frivolous and constraining their inward evolution.

Sikh ethos exalts me to make myself so powerful that there is simply no reason to be afraid of the senses. One feels capable of making use of them, of becoming their master, of using them as means, not letting them become the goal.

Life is a circle- whether we look from within or from without, what we will find is one and the same thing. In this circle, if we start searching from the outer, we will reach the inner, if we start searching from the inner,

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we reach the outer- cause we the existence is undividable, undivided, whole, total, complete. We can start our journey from anywhere.

It's advisable to start from the outer, as by nature man is an extrovert and it's advisable to start from a familiar terrain. Let the transformation happen naturally, let the spiritual discipline be natural, spontaneous, not forced. If senses are experiencing it, then I need to reinforce them, make them more stringer, equip them better, make all the sense organs more robust, more intense, more sensitive. Where each of them is being used optimally, rationally, doing what they ought to do and not what they are.

Let's begin with where a man is naturally standing. Why not begin with the nature of man.

Sikh ethos is very natural, very simple, nothing unnatural, complicated., have no interest on asking man to be the other than what he is. Accepting his immediacy totally. He can be refined. Don't throw the stone away cause it isn't a diamond, the diamond is hidden in the stone, it can become manifest - hence easy I to throw it away, discard, challenging is to transform it, transmute it.

Masters exalted us to observe the likeness of the all pervading spirit across spectrum. For them existence is a mystery that has mysterious keys that open the door to the divine- all paths of mystery, all words, all scriptures, which open the door of the divine are a likeness of the existence. And it is interesting when he says that scriptures, words, mysteries and paths can in themselves be divine.

Existence is formless, shapeless, beyond conceptualization. Cannot draw a lie around it, ascribe any definition to it. Drawing lines is ones prerogative, but reality is sans them. It's only a step to witness and experience the formless; it's like a toy given to a small child to play such that he sleeps. And over a time scale he will grow out of it. Eventually will forget its existence totally.

Same is the case here, one day all my limitations will dissolve, cease, have no value and I will grow out of them, step over from them and my love for the existence will grow more, enrich me more, fill me more, and would transform into devotion. And on the day that my love becomes devotion and rises towards the divine, I will forget the lovers, the toys of my adulthood, childhood, which helped me to be here.

Even devotion is not fulfilled until the devotee himself has become the divine. One day. The last toy, the divine, will also drop away. Then, only the love which is left behind from all his experiences will remain. All toys will drop away, but what will remain is what these toys have helped him to experience. All forms will disappear, but the formless love will go on slowly growing. Love goes on accumulating, and a day will come when the divine has become pure love; even the lover will disappear. On that date, the devotee becomes divine ❑

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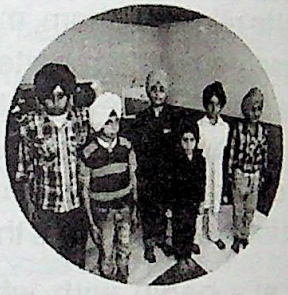
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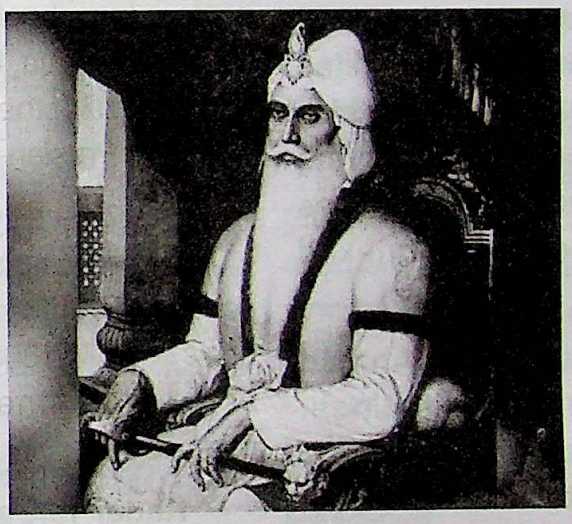
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Maharaja Ranjit Singh – a Patron of Literature

*PRIN. SAWAN SINGH GOGIA**

Most of us know Maharaja Ranjit Singh as a secular administrator, brave conqueror, and consolidator of the conquered areas who created a strong state of five rivers which extended from Sutlej River to Afghanistan and Kashmir where people lived peacefully. He is respected as a brave general who checked the foreign invaders who looted our land and abducted our ladies to auction them in the foreign lands. On the basis of my study of many books and articles about the Maharaja, I have found that he was also a patron of literature and I would share this with my readers.



Love for Literature

In spite of the adverse circumstances of his time most of which was spent in fighting against the foreign invaders, extending and consolidating his empire, he never lost his love for literature. No doubt, he was illiterate, but he had instructed his Generals that the Khalsa army should not destroy any library in the area they conquer.In 1834 when Hari Singh Nalwa and Prince Nau Nihal Singh attacked Peshawar, he instructed them to see that no damage was done to the precious library at Peshawar. It is said that his own library had hundreds of Arabic, Persian, Hindi and Punjabi books.

Patronizing Writers of Foreign Languages

Maharaja Ranjit Singh was well known for his patronage of literary persons. He was conscious of his duty towards them. He liberally patronized Giani Sant Singh, a scholar of Sanskrit, Punjabi and Persian, who translated The Ramayana by Tulsi Daas.

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Fakir Aziz-ud-din and Qadar Bakhsh, his well-known courtiers, were famous scholars of Persian and Arabic As recorded by Sita Ram Kohli, the later was sent bythe Maharaja to Ludhiana to learn English at the state expenses.

ZafarnamahRanjit Singh written in 1832-33 by **Dewan Amar Nath** is a contemporary Persian source of the reign of the Maharaja who asked him to write.It consists of 41 chapters and was edited by Sita Ram Kohli in 1928. In 1834, he also wrote Fatehnamah in order to celebrate the victory of the Lahore Darbar forces when they conquered and annexed Peshawar.

Another famous scholar, **Ahmad Yar**, wrote Shahnama Ranit Singh. **Munshi Sohan Lal Suri** wrote a unique history book, UmdatulTwarikh. **Padit Radha Krishan**, author of Qwaide Rajparbandh (Rules of Administration), was a favorite scholar of Ranjit singh.Himat Singh was commissioned by the Maharaja to write a book about the administration of Kashmir.

Poets of the Punjabi Language & Ranjit Singh

Ranjit Singh bestowed landed property on many Punjabi poets and awarded them with a lot of cash. **Syed Hashim Shah** (1734-1843), author of the love story of Shirin Ferhad,was his favorite poet. Manuscript of this book dully stamped by the seal of the Maharaja can be seen in the state archives at Patiala. He was granted Jagir (land) near his village, Jagdeoe, in recognition of his literary eminence. His stories of *'Sassi Punnu'* and of *'Sohni Mehiwal*, in Punjabi are well known.

Bhai Budh Singh Lahori wrote in poetry a huge book 'Budh Baridh' as desired by the Maharaja, He mentioned this fact in 60th stanza of the book. It is translation of a famous Persian book, Auardanish, about politics.

Bhai Sondha Singh, a poet and scholar of saintly nature was another jewel of his court. In 1808, he translated a Persian book' Hatamnama'. It is his best composition.

Kadar Yar, a famous narrative poet ofhis time, writes that he was awarded landed property with a well by the Maharaja for writing the story of PuranBhagat.

Hakam Singh of Raipur wrote more than a dozen compositions. His poem' Siharfi Guru Khalse Shah Kee' is very famous.

Zafar Beg and SawanYar weresome other poets who were also patronized by Ranjit Singh.In one of his compositions, Zafar Beg writes that Ranjit Singh was cheated and poisoned by the *Frangis.*

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Shah Mohammad has immortalized himself by writing '**Jangnama**.' He writes that main cause of the defeat of the Khalsa army was the absence of the Maharaja (***Shah Mohammad aik sarkar bajhon fojan jit ke ant noon harian nee***). He admires Ranjit Singh by writing that his empire was truly secular.

Bhag Singh and Kahan Singh Banga were two other well-known poets of the court. Efforts made by the Maharaja for the Punjabi literature are praiseworthy. Piara Singh Padam, a reputed Punjabi writer, in one of his articles, Maharaja Ranjit Singh and Punjabi, has given a long list of 24 Punjabi writers and poets who were liberally patronized by the Maharaja.

Sankrit and Hindi Writers Patronized by Ranjit Singh

The Maharaja did not patronize only the writers of Persian and Punjabi, but he was also liberal towards poets and writers of Sanskrit and Hindi whom he awarded profusely in spite of the fact that some of them did not belong to Punjab. **Pandit Nihal Singh Lahori** who interpreted ' Japji' in Sanskrit was a reputed poet in the court of the Maharaja. He alsowrote two books — Sikhi Parbhakar and Nirmal Parbhakar. In these books, he praised the Khalsa.

In his book *'Fateh Namah* Guru Khalsa JeeKa,' **Ganesh Daas Pingal** has nicely narrated the wars of Multan and Peshawarfought by Ranjit Singh. **Gwal Bhatt of Mathura** who narrated in detail victories of Ranjit Singh in his epic '*Vijaie Vinod'* lived in the Maharaja's court for a long time. He was a reputed Hindi poet and was paid 500 rupees per month.He wrote that during the reign of the Maharaja thelion and the goat could quench their thirst together from the same ferry.

Bhai Megh Singh, a student of GianiSant Singh, wrote the biography of his teacher in his book '**Bhai Sahib Chadrika**'. Another famous poet of the court, Puran Singh, wrote the most important story of the conquest of Sirhind.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh and his Court Language

No doubt, during the Maharaja's reign in Punjab witnessed about 40 years of peace. Still, the foundation of the Sikh power rested upon military organization, therefore the main emphasis was on military matters. Persian had been the court language since long. No doubt the ruler was new, but the courtiers and system did not change.

Moreover, Ranjit Singh was awfully busy in extending and consolidating his empire. Strengthening the state borders

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and teaching a lesson to the foreign invaders from the west who insulted and looted us took most of his time. Afghans from the west and British soldiers from Delhi were eager to usurp his kingdom.

Court language of the neighboring states and even that of the East India Company was Persian. Even the Marathas in the 18th century had Persian as their court language. The whole office record of the Peshwas period was in Persian. It does not mean that the Maharaja did not want to introduce Punjabi in Gurmukhi script asthe official language The fact is that circumstances did not allow him to take this step. Changing required a long and peaceful period. Conversation in the offices was done in Punjabi'

Lover of Calligraphy

As described by Fakir Aziz-ud- din, the Maharaja rewarded calligraphists. Once Pir Bakhash, a calligraphist of Arabic and Persian, wrote the holy Quran and was looking for some rich Muslim who may take the holy Quran and give him a good award. When the Maharaja came to know of it, he sent for Pir Bakhash, took the holy Quran from him for ten thousand rupees. The Fakir asked the Mahraja why he did that as it was something that concerned a Muslim. The Maharaja said", God granted me only one eye so that I may see all the holy books with one eye."

Conclusion

I agree with Sayed Mohammmad Latif who wrote in his book' History of the Punjab' that Maharaja Ranjit Singh patronized the scholars and poets of Arabic, Persian, Hindi and Punjabi whose compositions are a valuable source for the history of his period. □

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My Meeting with a Sage Scholar: The Incredible Bhai Sahib Sr. Raghbir Singh Bir

[The Founder of The Atam Science Trust – Dedicated to the Divinity Inspiring Gurbani]

AMARJIT SINGH*

In the year 1969, I was working as Sub Divisional Officer, Head-works, Ropar, when my 'Tai Ji' [Aunt-wife of the elder brother of my father] presented me the book entitled 'Bandginama', written by S. Raghbir Singh 'Bir' [whom we all lovingly addressed as 'Papa Ji']. The reading of the book created a deep impression on my mind, and I was filled with an intense longing to meet him (Papa Ji).

In those days, in my Sub-Division a lot of land on the right bank of Sirhind Canal was lying vacant. Ropar's Radha Soami Branch requested me that I should recommend some of the vacant land to be allotted on lease to the Radha Soami Satsang, so that a 'Satsang Bhawan' [congregational hall] could be built there. On my recommendation, the govt. allotted some of the land to it. While starting the digging of foundations for the Bhawan, on the organisers' request, I carried the first basket of earth on my head.

After an interval, in February 1970, the organizers requested me to accompany them to Baba CharanSingh Ji at Beas, and seek the boon of 'Naam' [God's Name] from him. I said to them, "I have great respect for Baba Charan Singh Ji, but I have no intentions in my mind to adopt him as the Guru because I regard Sri Guru Granth Sahib as my sole 'Guru' [Holy Preceptor] and otherwise also, I have some doubts in my mind about the Radha Soami sect which can be removed only through a personal dialogue with Baba Charan Singh Ji. For dispelling my doubts, the organizers took an appointment from Baba Charan Singh Ji. I was to meet him at 5 P.M. on 27th February, 1970. In this connection, I was handed over a letter received from Mr. Khanna, Personal Assistant to Baba Charan Singh Ji. I was caught in a dilemma and started praying, "O True Sovereign! my intelligence is insignificant; how shall I have discussion with Baba Charan Singh who is an exalted saint? I have no spiritual

The writer - a Gurmukh in the true sense - retired as Chief Engineer, Govt of Punjab - has dedicated his life to the cause of Education, in particular - The Dagshai Public School, Dagshai Cantt. (H.P) [E-mail: amardolly3000@gmail.com] - *Ed. TSR.*

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knowledge whatsoever; I shall be easily confused; per chance, I may not take a wrong decision." All of a sudden, on 22nd February, I got a telegram from Calcutta that my sister had met with a serious accident at Kankinara (about 20 kms. from Calcutta). That very night, I alongwith my mother left for Calcutta by Kalka Mail.

Two or three days passed in Calcutta's Military Hospital, where my sister was admitted to the I.C.U. On 27th February, at Kanikinara, at about 3 P.M. I asked my brother-in-law (sister's husband) if he knew anything about S. Raghbir Singh Bir. He had just said 'no', when my elder brother, S. Narjit Singh, who had come from Gujrat in this very context, entered the room and asked if I had read the book '**Bandginama**'. Before I could reply, my brother told me that after finding out S. Raghbir Singh Bir's telephone number from the Telephone Directory at Howrah Railway Station, he had fixed an appointment on that very day at 5 o'clock in the evening. He told me to hurry up, so that we could reach Bir Sahib's place in time for the meeting. My surprise knew no bounds. How did the 'cause of causes' Waheguru (God), send me to Calcutta in stead of Beas to meet another holy man in place of Baba Charan Singh on that very day and how did my brother fix the appointment without my asking?

At 5 P.M. sharp, we, both the brothers, knocked at BirJi's house at 89, Harish Mukerji Road. Papa Ji himself opened the door and said, "Well, Gursikhs! be seated and let me know what brings you here." When we narrated the whole thing, he said, "Look, there are many ways and means to reach the goal. You have come to Calcutta. Many trains come here. You could come by any of the trains, perhaps, by some goods train also. What needs to be kept in mind is that one should not change many trains, because it will involve too much waste of time. I regard Sri Guru Granth Sahib as my Guru (Holy Preceptor) and 'Deity'.

For me, Sri Guru Granth Sahib is the greatest Saint. You have to take your own decision. Radha Soami sect is also good, and many other sects are also good. Go, decide yourself by thinking with your own mind, and if your mind is inclined to repose faith in Sri Guru Granth Sahib, then come here tomorrow at this very time and bring all your doubts or apprehensions in writing. Nothing happens by chance. It is not by chance that you have been born in a Sikh family, and this too is not by chance that you have come here. Think and reflect yourself and take the decision. Returning from the interview, the two of us kept thinking and finally decided, "Lord God, who had made all this remarkable sequence of events happen by His will, certainly wishes that we should go to meet Papa Ji again." So, next day, at 5 o'clock in the evening, we reached

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Papa Ji's place. At that time, he was sitting and there were two chairs by his side in his small room, which we occupied. There was no conversation. Our silence and our hearts filled with love conveyed everything. Papa Ji started giving his first lesson and kept speaking for an hour. In between, I tried to open the paper on which I had recorded my doubts, but Papa Ji forbade me with a gesture of his hand. When the lesson was over, Papa Ji asked me to spell out my apprehensions. I opened the paper and read all the questions in my mind, and folding it, I put it back in my pocket, because he had answered all the questions in his hour-long discourse, and there was left nothing for me to ask. He gave me some books and said, "When you go back to Ropar, do partake of 'amrit' alongwith all the members of your family. You may do so at any gurdwara. It is like filling up the 'Admission Form' for joining Guru Gobind Singh Sahib's Regiment." He told me that he had opened aschool at Dagshai (Himachal Pradesh), where he stayed during summer. He directed me to meet him there. My sister passed away at the Calcutta Hospital on 7th March, but it was her good fortune that on that very day Papa Ji visited the hospital at noon-time, blessed her and prayed for her. In my mind, this doubt did arise, why my sister could not survive even after the 'ardas' (prayer), but accepting God's will uncomplainingly, I did not give any importance to this doubt. Two years later, when Papa Ji came to Chandigarh and stayed with me, he said spontaneously, "You must be thinking why your sister passed away inspite my offering a prayer for her. I had offered this prayer – 'O True Sovereign! these two brothers have been in mental agony for the last several days. Either restore their sister to perfect health, or take her to your abode soon, so that these two brothers may attend to their respective work and business." In this way, Papa Ji dispelled this doubt too without my asking.

During these very days, while going with Papa Ji in a taxi from Calcutta to Kankinara, I asked him, "Who has published the best annotation and explication of Sri Guru Granth Sahib? Life is short and limited, so kindly tell me about it, so that time may not be wasted by reading a wrong book." Papa Ji asked, "How many 'ashtpadis' (octets) are there in 'Sukhmani Sahib' and how many verses are in each octet?" I replied, "There are 24 ashtpadis and in each 'ashtpadi', there are eight stanzas, and every stanza has ten verses." Papa Ji said, "If by understanding one or two verses, you lodge them in your mind, you will be ferried across the world- ocean. Brother, do you want to become a true Sikh or a 'Gyani' (knowledgeable person or scholar). For becoming a Sikh, only one or two verses of Sukhmani Sahib are enough. There is great joy in becoming a Sikh. To become a Gyani entails a big responsibility. First, you should become a Sikh. If God wishes you to

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become a 'Gyani' (scholar), He will Himself fashion you into one."

On return to Ropar, and after getting finished with customary ceremonies, I requested my parents and wife to partake of 'amrit' (baptismal nectar) which they accepted gladly, and all of us partook of 'amrit' at Anandpur Sahib on the day of Baisakhi – 13th April, 1970.

'Lord Compassionate to the humble! Trusting to Thee, have I put, my whole family on Thy boat.' P. 33. This humble slave can still feel and experience the ecstatic memory of the miracles which the wondrous Tenth Guru Sahib wrought at Anandpur Sahib. In obedience to Papa Ji's command, I got my seven- year old child admitted to Dagshai Public School. After Papa Ji's coming to Dagshai in 1970, I had several meetings with him. Many times, he made us (me and my wife) put up at Kothi No. 1 Satsang Niwas itself, and told us many things in casual conversation. It was his keen desire that I should give up my job and serve at the school. For certain reasons, I could not leave my job, but taking long leave I reached him. To my wife, Papa Ji gave a job in the school, and in this way, as we had the pleasure of enjoying Papa Ji's company fully till his end came. One day, noticing a toy lying on Papa Ji's office table, I asked him, "Why have you put this toy on your table?" That toy depicted a man balancing himself on a tight rope with the help of a long stick held in his hand. Papa Ji said, "This is not a toy; this is a Sikh, who can waver but cannot fall." In this manner, many times, Papa Ji easily revealed profound truths.

Papa Ji was an exalted practitioner of Divine Name meditation and he had made his life-journey fruitful by meditating on the Name Divine with each breath and morsel. Very affectionately he told us that the following edict recorded on P. 1337 of Sri Guru Granth Sahib changed the course of his life.

'O my soul! with concentrated contemplation

To the Name Divine listen.' P 1337

Through this edict, the True Guru has instructed us to listen to Lord God's Name – to utter 'Waheguru', 'Waheguru' (God) – first loudly and then at a low pitch, and then after sometime in the mind itself and to listen to its echo, and while listening, keeping mind's concentration completely absorbed in it, and not let it wander in any other direction. This is the method of 'simran' (Divine Name meditation). While practising meditation in this manner, the mind even stops listening, and attains to 'aphurawastha' (state of deep meditation or trance); it is a state of thoughtlessness. One day, Papa Ji said to me, "One experiences great joy in this state. But when mind has

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become dead, who experiences the bliss?" This puzzle he posed all right, but he did not give the answer. After the passage of sometime, with Whaguru's (God's) boundless grace, the answer came automatically.

ਸਚ ਖੰਡਿ ਵਸੈ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰੁ ॥ ਕਰਿ ਕਰਿ ਵੇਖੈ ਨਦਰਿ ਨਿਹਾਲ ॥ ਤਿਥੈ ਖੰਡ ਮੰਡਲ ਵਰਭੰਡ ॥ ਜੇ ਕੋ ਕਥੈ ਤ ਅੰਤ ਨ ਅੰਤ ॥ ਤਿਥੈ ਲੋਅ ਲੋਅ ਆਕਾਰ ॥ ਜਿਵ ਜਿਵ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਤਿਵੈ ਤਿਵ ਕਾਰ ॥ ਵੇਖੈ ਵਿਗਸੈ ਕਰਿ ਵੀਚਾਰੁ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਕਥਨਾ ਕਰੜਾ ਸਾਰੁ ॥੩੭॥

'The Formless Supreme being abides in the Realm of Eternity.

Oves His creation he casts his glance of grace and renders them happy.

The Lord beholds His creation and feels happy by contemplating over it.

Saith Nanak: Hard as steel is the story of that realm to narrate.'

[Japuji Sahib- SGGS: 8]

Meaning: In the blissful state of the Realm of Eternity or Truth, God Himself abides in man. It is a state of total unity and indistinguishability. The Akal Purkh (Timeless God) makes all happy with His grace.

'He is an embodiment of bliss; He is all bliss and bliss.'

This state cannot be described, and can only be felt or experienced. Guru ArjanDevJi describes this state of bliss in the following verses:

'The nine treasures and the Nectar are the Lord's Name.

Within the human body is its seat. Therein is deep meditation and melody of celestial music.

The wonder and marvel of it cannot be narrated.

He, to whom God Himself shows, beholds it. ❑

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*JAGPAL SINGH TIWANA**



KP Singh "joins the ranks of our past commencement speakers which include such accomplished and notable individuals as Senator Richard Lugar, Governors Evan Bayh and Mitch Daniels, author John Green, and Holocaust survivor Eva Kor." – Letter from Dr. James M. Danko, President - Butler University.

A native of India, KP Singh is one of the Hoosier State's most prolific writers, published authors, and well-known artists. Since 1967, KP has been an active citizen of the Indianapolis community through his advocacy and support of historic preservation, cultural diversity, the arts, and interfaith cooperation. His art strives to heighten awareness of the role of place and space in the visual, cultural, and spiritual fabric of our communities, and his writings offer diverse perspectives and reflections on matters of the spirit.

KP Singh Designs was founded in 1972 and specializes in fine art and KP's pen-and-ink drawings of great buildings, colleges, places of worship, and other historic sites. Distinctively, his drawings are artistic expressions of his passion for architecture, history, education, and faith and may be seen in public and private collections throughout the United States and the world. In 2007, three of his drawings were installed in The Sikh Heritage Gallery at The Museum of Natural History, part of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC.

KP considers community service to be a major focus and commitment of his Sikh faith as well as a civic responsibility. He is a founding member of The International Center of Indianapolis, a past member of the Butler University Center for Faith and Vocation Advisory Board, and has tirelessly served numerous other local and national organizations. Through his volunteer work and speaking engagements, Singh is committed to interfaith and humanitarian initiatives and celebrating our country's diversity. Additionally, KP has worked to offer cultural training to local police, TSA personnel, teachers, and civic leaders to create a better understanding of Sikh and other faith traditions.

He earned his Bachelor of Arts from Punjab University and Bachelor of Architecture and Master of Technology in Regional Planning from The Indian Institute of Technology. He also earned a Master of City Planning from The University of Michigan. KP is the recipient of many awards and honors for his work and philanthropic efforts. □

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CONTENTS

MEDITATION	Let us rejoice Lord's Name in the month of Phalgun!	*Shabad Gurbani*	5
EDITORIAL	The Magic of Sikh "Symbols"	Paropkar Singh Puri	6
THEOLOGY	Gurmat and Indian Philosophy: An Inter-Textual Interface	Dr. Harjeet Singh	9
PHILOSOPHY	The Vedas and Guru Granth Sahib: A Philosophic Interface	Dr. Kirpal Singh (New Zealand)	19
MORAL TRADITION	Three Pillars of a Fulfilled Life	Dr. (Bhai) Harbans Lal	23
	Sikhism on the rise in Pakistan	Gurcharan Singh Kulim	31
SOCIOLOGY	The "Baba" culture - challenges for Sikhism	Baljeet Singh	37
HERITAGE	'Manji' and Miri-Piri': Innovative Systems Introduced by Guru Amar Das Ji	Surjan Singh (Singapore)	41
	Holi Now Khalsa's "Hola-Mahalla!"	Jagjit Singh	46
PERSPECTIVES	Where Religion and Law Intersect: An American Scenario	Dr. I J Singh (New York)	49
VIEWPOINT	The Psychology of Some Cult Leaders: "Dera Sant" of India	Dr. S S Sodhi (Canada)	52
PANORAMA	Compassionate Ludhiana - Home for Homeless	Minna Zutshi	57
LANGUAGE	Let us celebrate 'MAA-BOLI' - Punjabi!	Mrs O. Tara Singh	59
DIASPORA	Bidar to Hasan Abdal	Bhupinder Singh (USA)	62
TRIBUTE	A Homage to Sardar Jodh Singh	Contributed	67
OBITUARY	S. Gurmit Singh : An Obituary	(Bawa) Jagdev Singh, OAM	70
POET'S CORNER	At the Guru's Gate	Chris Mooney Singh	73
DIARY	Synopsis of Notable Events		74
BOOKS	Life of Gurmukh: Sant Teja Singh by Dr. Khem Singh Gill	*Reviewed by* Prof. Hardev Singh Virk	78
	Adabnama: Khalsa College Amritsar by Jasbir Singh Sarna	M P Satija	84

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Let us rejoice Lord's Name in the month of Phalgun!

ਬਾਰਹ ਮਾਹਾ ਮਾਂਝ ਮਹਲਾ ੫ ਘਰੁ ੪ ੴ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥

ਫਲਗੁਣਿ ਅਨੰਦ ਉਪਾਰਜਨਾ ਹਰਿ ਸਜਣ ਪ੍ਰਗਟੇ ਆਇ ॥ ਸੰਤ ਸਹਾਈ ਰਾਮ ਕੇ ਕਰਿ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਦੀਆ ਮਿਲਾਇ ॥ ਸੇਜ ਸੁਹਾਵੀ ਸੂਰਬ ਸੁਖ ਹੁਣਿ ਦੁਖਾ ਨਾਹੀ ਜਾਇ ॥ ਇਛ ਪੁਨੀ ਵਡਭਾਗਣੀ ਵਰੁ ਪਾਇਆ ਹਰਿ ਰਾਇ ॥ ਮਿਲਿ ਸਹੀਆ ਮੰਗਲੁ ਗਾਵਹੀ ਗੀਤ ਗੋਵਿੰਦ ਅਲਾਇ ॥ ਹਰਿ ਜੇਹਾ ਅਵਰੁ ਨ ਦਿਸਈ ਕੋਈ ਦੂਜਾ ਲਵੈ ਨ ਲਾਇ ॥ ਹਲਤੁ ਪਲਤੁ ਸਵਾਰਿਓਨੁ ਨਿਹਚਲ ਦਿਤੀਅਨੁ ਜਾਇ ॥ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਸਾਗਰ ਤੇ ਰਖਿਅਨੁ ਬਹੁੜਿ ਨ ਜਨਮੈ ਧਾਇ ॥ ਜਿਹਵਾ ਏਕ ਅਨੇਕ ਗੁਣ ਤਰੇ ਨਾਨਕ ਚਰਣੀ ਪਾਇ ॥ ਫਲਗੁਣਿ ਨਿਤ ਸਲਾਹੀਐ ਜਿਸ ਨੋ ਤਿਲੁ ਨ ਤਮਾਇ ॥੧੩॥ [SGGS: 133]

Translation*

In the month of Phalgun, bliss comes to those,
unto whom the Lord, the Friend, has been revealed.

The Saints, the Lord's helpers, in their mercy, have united me with Him.

My bed is beautiful, and I have all comforts. I feel no sadness at all.

My desires have been fulfilled-by great good fortune,
I have obtained the Sovereign Lord as my Husband.

Join with me, my sisters, and sing the songs of rejoicing and the
Hymns of the Lord of the Universe.

There is no other like the Lord-there is no equal to Him. He embellishes this world and the world hereafter, and He gives us our permanent home there.

He rescues us from the world-ocean;
never again do we have to run the cycle of reincarnation.

I have only one tongue, but Your Glorious Virtues are beyond counting.
Nanak is saved, falling at Your Feet.

In Phalgun, praise Him continually;
He has not even an iota of greed. || 13 ||

*Translation from : Gurbani Researcher

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The Magic of Sikh Symbols

PAROPKAR SINGH PURI*

Broadly Speaking,Sikhs can be classified into two main groups viz Sehajdhari Sikhs and Amritdhari Sikhs. Sehajdhari Sikhs are those who have great respect for the Sikh Gurus and their "Bani"as enshrined in Sri Guru Granth Sahib,go to the Gurdwara, but have not yet taken the vows of initiation into the Khalsa Panth. Sehajdhari Sikhs are not necessarily born in Sikh families but are adopting Sikhism, out of their own free will and conscience, slowly and gradually(sehaj). Sehajdhari Sikhs are,therefore,fellow travellers who have kept up the hope that they would upgrade themselves as full members of the Khalsa Panth in due course of time.

Amritdhari Sikhs,on the other hand, are formally initiated Sikhs,who are required to wear the five distinctive markers of the Khalsa as prescribed by Guru Gobind Singh ji and live a truthful life as per Sikh "Rehat Maryada" i.e. the code of conduct.The history of the evolution and growth of these Sikhs is an inspiring saga of faith, fidelity, courage sacrifice and religious conviction.

Majority of the Amritdhari Sikhs are converts from Hinduism, the low caste, marginalized sections of society who were denied any rights and privileges that were being enjoyed by the higher caste Hindus. Rigidity of the caste system would not allow them any opportunity for advancement in the social hierarchy.

Guru Nanak Dev ji raised the social status of these hapless people by embracing them as equal members of society and gave them dignity. To reaffirm Guru Nanak Dev jis cardinal principle of equality, Guru Gobind Singh ji admitted all classes into the Khalsa Brotherhood, without any caste prejudices, advancing further the concept of equality on an unparalleled scale.

Guru Gobind Singh ji invested the neophytes with five magical symbols that not only gave them a common identity but also changed their lives and their destinies.The impact of the symbols was such that it revolutionized the mindset of the people and transformed the pacifist Sikhs into a formidable force to fight against religious intolerance and other groups that

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were out to destroy the Sikh faith. People who were looked down upon before suddenly turned into protectors of the weak and defenseless.

By wearing the magical symbols, sudras became Singhs (Lions) instantly, the low caste turned into high caste Kshatriy as, and the untouchables became acceptable as equal and respectable members of society.This transformation could not have been possible without the magic of Sikh symbols.

The Khalsa initiating rites associated with the symbols also had a magical effect on the neophytes. It infused in them a new spirit that imbibed steel and grit and immortalized the indomitable spirit of the Khalsa for all times to come.

The symbols not only changed the physical appearance of the Sikhs instantly but also their psyche.The humble turned warriors overnight to fight the bold combatant and one Sikh became ready to fight a legion (*sawa lakh*).

Sikh symbols have the mystique that inspires hope,confidence and awe. It is not possible to explain its mystical aura. But the martyrdom of thousands of Sikhs who gave their head but not their hair bears ample testimony to the mystique of the KESH (unshorn hair) which is the principal symbol of Sikh faith, identity and pride.

In the medieval past, the Sikhs were threatened for what they believed, killed for refusing to convert and butchered where ever seen. It is, therefore, a mystery as to how the Sikhs not only survived but also flourished in spite of the unprecedented efforts of some Mughal rulers to annihilate them. This mystery, however, can be explained with reference to Guru Gobind Singh jis assurance to his brave Sikhs that as long as they remained firm in their faith and maintained their distinct identity, he would bestow all his blessings for the glory of the Khalsa.

Jab lag Khalsa rahe nyara

Tab lag tej dio mai sara.

Jab eh gahen bipran ki reet,

Main na karun in ki partit.

These words of Guru Gobind Singh ji do not convey a mere assurance but are pregnant with a solemn promise that has inspired the faithful to remain resolute in their religious convictions ever since.These words also underscore the fact that the magical blend of the Sikh "BANA" and the "BANI"of Guru Nanak Dev ji and other Gurus is the soul and substance of Sikh religion and is indispensable for the survival and growth of the Sikh community.

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The magic of the symbols wears off on those who renounce them.There is no place for these "patits"—those who have fallen in faith, in Sikhism.They lose their identity, sense of belonging and emotional bonding with the Sikh community and consequently merge their persona in the faceless multitude of anonymity.

The magic of the symbols have kept the Sikhs united in faith and in their fight for survival for more than 300 years.Without these magical symbols of Sikh religious identity,it is doubtful if Sikhism would be able to survive even 30 years.

Today,the Sikhs are welcomed the world over with their flowing beards and colourful turbans,respected for the faith they follow,honoured as Cabinet Ministers and Parliamentarians in many foreign countries and admired for their rich history and noble traditions.

Today it is well known that 'kesh' covered with a turban is an integral part of Sikh religion. The Canadian Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau,is said to have recently announced that anybody removing the turban of a Sikh will be punished with ten years imprisonment. (I wonder about how true is that statement)

This metamorphosis has been possible because the Sikhs had always shown remarkable resilience and courage to fight all odds and overcome all obstacles without compromising with the basic and enduring values of their faith.

Let us,therefore,not yield to those who want to weaken our identity or try to divide us.Our challenge today is to protect ourselves,not to give up who we are,and build a future. ❑

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In view of the global readership "The Sikh Review" is going to publish Matrimonial Column in their up-coming editions to extend co-operation to Gursikh families - living across the world – In search for a suitable Gursikh Match for their grown up children.

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Gurmat and Indian Philosophy: . An Inter-Textual Interface

DR HARJEET SINGH*

Introduction:

Gurmat, translated literally means the thought (mat) of the masters(gurus). In common parlance it refers to the teachings, philosophy and ideology espoused by the adherents of the Sikh faith. Contained in the holy scripture of the Sikhs: Sri Guru Granth Sahib, it embodies,in essence the spiritual and mystical philosophy of Guru Nanak Dev that was later enlarged through the inclusion of the writings of subsequent Gurus and Sufi saints of the Bhakti movement. The 1430-page scripture comprises the compositions (Baani) of 6 Gurus, 15 Saints (Bhaktas), 11 Bards (Bhaats) and 4 Sikhs. It is composed in 31 meters (Raagas). The Saints included Muslims, like Sheikh Baba Farid from Multan; those from the low castes like Kabir (weaver) from Banaras, Namdev (tailor) from Maharashtra, Ravi Das (cobbler) from Banaras, Sadna (Butcher) from Sindh and Dhanna (jatt farmer) from Punjab as well as those from the high caste like Parmanand Ramanand (brahmin) from Banaras.The compositions that comprised Gurmat were essentially the response of these composers to the exploitative polity and suppressive social order prevailing at that time.Thus it is that Gurmat in addition to being a religious philosophy is also an ideology with social and political undertones that is pluralistic in terms of its content and contributors and egalitarian in terms of perspective. Within Gurmat one finds references to a member of religious groups and factions that flourished at that point of time such as Vaishnavs, Shaivas, Sakat, Buddhists, Kaprwhras, Sanyasis, Bairagis, Udaasis, Avdhoots, Kaprhiyas, Surayis, Haajs, Darvesh, etc. Their religious texts such as Vedas, Puranas, Smrities, Shastras, Quran, Kateb, and religious practices like *Pooja-Paath, Sandhya, Aarti, Maun Vart, Yajna, Aasanas, Vibhooti, Namaaz, Roza, Sunnat, Hajj* also find mention in Gurmat literature (Kaur 1993, p 31).

Composed in the form of poetic literature, Gurmat was not created in a philosophical vacuum. Instead it emerged out of an interface with other religious and philosophical strains contemporaneous to it as well as those that preceeded it. Refusing to echo the established ideas of the time, Gurmat instead seeks to overcome the stagnation in Indian philosophy of the

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time and constructs new thoughts and value systems, which are pro-humanity. The new ideas and concepts that are enunciated in Gurmat are constructed using the process of inter-dialogue both at the conscious and the subconscious level. Using this methodology Gurmat addresses other schools of thought within Indian philosophy. One finds numerous insights and echoes of these within Gurmat literature. But the speciality of the litterateurs who produced Gurmatis that instead of adopting such insights per se they modified these to fit into the prevailing context thus increasing their relevance manifold (Singh 2006, 117). In the process it evolved as a philosophy in reaction to and representative of the religious thinking, practice and aspirations of its times. As such any study of the development of Indian philosophy would be incomplete without taking into count this representative ideology. It is in this light that the present paper seeks to understand the beginning and development of Gurmat philosophy through an understanding of other contemporary strains of Indian philosophy including Vedic philosophy, Siddha and Nath Yogi traditions, Bhakti movement and Islam with which Gurmat engaged in a dialogue; and the inter-textual relationships that were formed between these and Gurmat. The objective here is not to challenge the originality of Gurmat but rather to establish its outward looking and inclusive character. It may be mentioned that Indian Philosophy refers to all strains of philosophy that were influential on the Indian sub-continent at the time that Gurmat came into being.

Vedic Philosophy and Gurmat:

The foundations of Indian philosophy are believed to lie in Vedic philosophy. Vedic philosophy includes within itself the essence of almost all schools of Indian philosophy. Vedic philosophy itself is rooted in the worship of natural powers and processes rather than the worship of God as an entity. Such natural forces that were perceived to have the ability to harm or destroy were deified. The interesting point here is that just as there is no mention of God (or the all-encompassing soul) so also the concept of 'soul' is absent in the Vedas. In fact, as opposed to the soul, in the Rig Veda one finds the mention of 'the mind' which here refers to the ability to live and breathe. Laying greater stress on human values the Vedasextol the virtues of human brotherhood, love, respect, filial love and respect for parents and respect for females by granting the latter an elevated status in society.

The Rig Veda which was composed over many centuries also responded to the ever changing socio- political and economic scenario and dwelled upon the social structure of the time which was the root of the caste system. The entity of Brahma the creator finds mention in the Rig Veda and it is held that Brahmins were formed from Brahma's face/head, Kshatriyas from his arms, the Vaishyas from his torso /thighs and the Sudras from his feet. Thus it was

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that Brahmins occupied the prime position in Vedic society and dealt with knowledge, the Kshatriyas dealt with administration, the Vaishyes with menial tasks and Sudra remained at the bottom strata as untouchables. One of the reasons for the organisation of the society into the caste system was that during this period the economy began to produce surplus goods that freed many people from direct labour and instead led them to adopt other occupations like priesthood, trade and administration. This in a way dealt a fatal blow to community living. (Dhand 1999, p 26)

Thus in the Vedas the ultimate aim of human existence was not the attainment of the spiritual and meta-physical plane, rather these stressed on achieving happiness within human form and existence. Vedas do not teach their adherents to aim for oneness with God and such like super powers rather they place their belief in the attainment of material comforts and joys through the performance of 'Yajnas' and doing societal good.

Following the Vedas, the Upanshads emerged as another significant mile stone of Indian Philosophy. This tradition is also known as Vedanta meaning 'the end of Vedas'. Actually this proposition of the end of Vedas does not seem appropriate because while Vedic philosophy is a form of mythification of nature and its powers, Upanishad lay the foundation of religious thinking. While man during the Vedic period prays to epitomes of natural forces such as Indra (Rain), Varun (Ocean), Agni (Fire) etc. for the grant of progeny and other material comforts, under the influence of the Upanishad, man moves towards self-realisation and often giving up the material comforts eulogised during the Vedic age opts for freedom from all worldly pursuits through the performance of penance. One may so say that the principles put forward in the Upanishads had their roots in the Rig Veda and were a reaction to the Vedic philosophy.

Another significant landmark in Indian philosophy was the Bhagwad Gita an important part of the Mahabharata which dwells on the relationship between the soul, the creator and the worldly wisdom involving the concepts of knowledge, enlightenment, action, deeds and prayers (Bhakti). The Bhagwad Gita presents the Creator as the formless one as well as one having material form-Krishna. While the formless construct of the creator is referred to in the Upanishads the creator in human from is first found in Bhagwad Gita only.

Bhagwad Gita seeks to give a new perspective to the concept of soul wherein it presents soul as indestructible and the body as its attire which the soul may change from time to time. Simultaneously Bhagwad Gita combines the earlier constructs of Bhakti (Meditation), Dharma (religion) and Karma (action). Laying stress on selfless and altruistic actions it encourages man to be action oriented rather than to aim for renunciation.

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The varied streams of Indian philosophy (Vedas, Upnishads and Bhagwad Gita) manifest in themselves such philosophical constructs as nature, soul, divine soul and creator and through these leave implicit and explicit influences on the philosophical streams that followed. Their influence is also visible in Gurmat wherein using logic and reason such constructs have either been accepted (vindicated) or rejected (demolished). For instance, while Gurmat accepts the Vedic stance of universal love and brotherhood, respect for parents, harmonious social relations and a high status for women it denounces and severely criticizes the caste system and the pantheon of Gods eulogized in the Rig Veda. The intrinsic character of Vedic philosophy the hallmarks of which were Brahmanic control over the social structure, idol worship and such like observances that had degenerated into mere ritualistic practice, also are contested and prohibited in Gurmat teachings. On the other hand, instead of promoting the quest for material comforts as espoused in the Vedas, Gurmat is more in consonance with the Upnishads and holds the quest of self-realization through meditation as the ultimate goal of human existence. Hence Gurmat dwells at length on the oneness of soul and the supreme soul. Gurmat accepts the constructs of 'Guru', 'Creator', 'Heaven and Hell' and 'Enlightenment' as given in the Upanishads and thus aligns with this stream of Indian philosophy. In this context Dharmender Kumar Gupta (2000) says:

It is in consonance with the Upanishad thought the Guru Nanak Dev lays stress on the oneness of the soul and the Supreme Being (God). Both the streams dwell on the ultimate union of the soul with the supreme being. (p 35)

Similarly, Gurmat echoes the construct of the transcendental and formless supreme being as laid down in Bhagwad Gita. It also accepts constructs such as enlightenment, meditation, the law of Karma. On the other hand, the human incarnation and reincarnation of the supreme being is not accepted by Gurmat unlike as in Bhagwad Gita. Thus one observes visible commonalities as well as strains of discord between Gurmat and prior Indian philosophy with regard to the concepts of God, soul and the world (human existence).

Siddha, Nath Yogi and Gurmat:

The literal meaning of the word Siddha is the exercise of control. In this context it refers to the exercise of control over the mind and to train it to work in a particular direction. Indian philosophers and thinkers have for long considered the mind to be the nerve centre or innovator for all kinds of human flaws and short-comings that come in the way of spiritual elevation. The control of the mind (or senses) is considered intrinsic to the attainment of the Yogic state. This thought had been adapted from Buddhism. Buddha's teachings too were aimed at rising above ritualistic practices and proposed that a person may walk the straight and righteous path only once he

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has learnt to control his mind. (Kasel, Singh and Lamba 2002, p 22). In fact, it was when Buddhism became an institutionalized religion and started laying greater stress on meaningless rituals and observances that it alienated itself from the folk-mind. At this juncture many Buddhist monks moved out from the Buddhist fold and began interacting in society in the form of Siddhas and provided a reformed interpretation of Buddhism. Lord Buddha equated worldly life to sorrow which emanated from worldly desires. He believed that the world (Bhava) was a home of sorrows and its inhabitants were replete with sorrow. The cause of all sorrow is desire and the only way to avoid falling prey to desire was to follow the 'middle path'. The 'middle path' is held to lead to 'Nirvana' (Salvation/Deliverance). On the other hand, Siddhas provided a new interpretation of the fundamental concepts of Buddhism namely desire, world (bhava) and Nirvana (Deliverance). While they did accept that Trishna (Desire) was the cause of Bhava (worldly sorrow). Yet for the attainment of Nirvana (salvation) they advocacated the satisfaction of Trishna (desire) in moderation preferring temperance and control over total abstinence. They termed their path as the path of great attachment (Singh 2004, p 18). Laying stress on temperance of desire Siddha thought promotes spiritual realization, the need of the Guru, the supremacy of human existence and thus differs from Vedic philosophy. Another landmark contribution in the journey of Indian philosophy as it moved away from Vedic philosophy was made by the tradition of Nath Yogis. This tradition criticized ostentatious display in terms of dress and rituals, idol worship and satisfaction of carnal desires and took root as a reaction to Siddha tradition. In addition, this tradition promoted the values of equality (through the establishment of a community kitchen) and thus added a social dimension in addition to spiritual dimension in their teachings. Frequently the Siddha tradition and Nath Yogi tradition are taken as essentially the same. This however is an illusion. Critically reviewed it becomes obvious that the Siddha tradition under the influence of Buddhism, spread mostly in the central and eastern parts of India and composed literature in languages spoken in the Magadh (present day Bihar, eastern U.P., Bengal and Orissa) region where the Nath Yogi tradition leaned more towards the Shavite cult and found greater acceptance in the North-western parts of India and composed literature in poetic forms and languages prevalent in Punjab and Rajasthan. Similarly, whereas the Siddha tradition espouses satisfaction of carnal desires through control, moderation and temperance, the Yogi tradition believes in renunciation and does not approve of the satisfaction of desires of the flesh. This is the reason why Yogic philosophy strongly supports a life of renunciation and is critical of females and their lure for men.

The ideas and principles of Siddha and Nath Yogi tradition have been seen to

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engage with Gurmat on a thematic plane. Gurmat criticizes the ideas of mind control, tantra (voodoo), black magic practice and temperate indulgence, yet it does not shy away from adopting the conceptual terminology of the Siddha tradition. Concepts like Gurmukh (believer), Sunn(state of transcendence),**Sehaj** (tranquillity), **Niranjan** (immaculate), **Nirvana** (salvation), **Naad** (music), **Bind** (moment), **Shabd** (hymn), **Surt** (consciousness) etc. find frequent mention in Sri Guru Granth Sahib. Gurmat gives importance to the human form and existence attaching to it a deeper significance. The specific contribution of Gurmat however lies in the fact that it has redefined the essence of these concepts in response to the changing context as a result of which concepts like Sunn and Niranjan which were essentially human attributes began to be used to describe the 'indescribable' and'formless' Almighty (Singh 2004, p 23). Gurmat literature establishes a similar dialogic relationship with the Nath Yogi thought current. Concepts like meditation and transcendental music (anhadnad) have been adopted in Gurmat while traditions such as the significance of Gurus and the community kitchen (langer) have also found a place in Gurmat. On the other hand, Gurmat philosophy decries/ denounces the criticism of females and asceticism and instead constructs new concepts wherein females are regarded as worthy of respect for it is through them that great men and even kings come into this world (***so kyon mandaa akhiye jit jamme raajan***) It is such new concepts which form the basis of Gurmat,

The time when Guru Nanak appeared on the social horizon of Punjab, the region was strongly influenced by followers of the Nath tradition who used the display of miraculous powers to attract followers and thus draw their sustenance. A considerable amount of Guru Nanak's compositions emerged out of debates with such Yogis. (Singh 1982, p 20)

Thus it emerges that Gurmat thought took shape through a dialogue and debate with preceeding schools of religions thought such as Nath Yogis and Siddhas and it is in no way cut off from its traditions.

Bhakti Movement and Gurmat:

The early middle ages (prior to 8th century A.D.) in Hindi literature are known less for literary compositions and more as a period of social awakening /enlightenment and aesthetic expression. This period is often termed as the period of Bhakti movement. This movement started in Southern India during the eighth century when Hinduism was combating the combined onslaught of Jainism and Buddhism while in the Malabar region Islam was in the process of putting down its roots. Like most other movements the Bhakti movement too emerged out of a particular socio-political context and as an answer to the needs of the time. This was the time when for the attainment of one's spiritual/ religious goals there were three accepted

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routes available namely the Karma (action oriented) path, the Yogic path and the Gyan (enlightenment) path. All three routes had achieved their zenith of development and had in the process become so institutionalized that they had alienated the common man. Brahmanism in its ritualistic form had divided people using concepts such as untouchability, impurity and the hierarchical caste system. The Yogic path involving renunciation was as it is a difficult path to follow and the path of knowledge or enlightenment often left one disillusioned (Jaggi 2001, 630). The Bhakti movement at this time took up the cause of the common man oppressed by kingly despotism and Brahmanical rituals and initiated the idea of universal brotherhood and universal good and was thus able to establish a connect with the masses. This movement presented spiritual and religious reforms as the solution to the prevailing exploitative socio-political structure. In this vein this movement questioned the symbols of the established socio-economic and political structures and presented an alternative to the brutal and despotic kingship in the form of a benign, forgiving and kind Almighty. Thus it is that the Bhakti movement in addition to being a religious movement is also accepted and seen as a socio-political reform movement that was a significant milestone in Indian history during the middle ages. The movement presented an anti-establishment ideology that replaced the established institutionalized and ritualistic meditation with the mystical path of devotion imbued with love and reverence. In fact, the Bhakti movement was replete with political undertones that underscored their socio-cultural reform agenda. It aimed to use socio-cultural and religious reforms to strike at the root of an already weakened political system that was tottering under the weight of ritualistic and exploitative Brahmanism. The movement shuns Brahminical rituals in favour of love and devotion to the Almighty (Singh1993, p 102).

Thus the Bhakti movement like the theory of karma (action) and Gyan (enlightenment) before it, considers religion as an expression of love for the Almighty and hence an instrument to establish universal brotherhood and egalitarianism rather than as something to be achieved through the strict observance of rigid codes of conducts. Within this framework the ideology considers the world a creation of the Almighty and hence worthy of being experienced; shuns false egos; denounces caste based discrimination; believes in bowing to God's will and practising the life of a householder and aims for spiritual elevation while living in the material sphere. God, for the proponents of the Bhakti movement could either be formless or have tangible (human) form.Bhakts like Surdas, Mirabai, Tulsidas etc. believed in the Almighty incarnated in the human form and hence started the streams of 'Rama bhakti' (devotion to Lord Rama) and 'Krishna Bhakti'(devotion to Lord Krishna). On the other hand, saints like Kabir and Ravidas believed God was formless, beyond

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description and omnipresent.They laid greater stress on mysticism. It is this second school of Bhakti movement that finds expression and place in Sri Guru Granth Sahib, being more in harmony with the tenets of Gurmat philosophy. Viewing the earth as a creation of God, practicing humility, shunning caste based discrimination and performing the duties of a householder have all been approved of in Gurmat. Simultaneously the concept of God in human form has strongly been criticized and denounced. The inclusion of the compositions of various saints of the Bhakti Movement like Kabir Das, Nam Dev, Ravi Das and others in the Sri Guru Granth Sahib bears testimony to the harmony and empathy that exists between Gurmat philosophy and the philosophy of the Bhakti movement. Doubtless Gurmat has meaningfully engaged with and imbibed from the Bhakti movement. In fact, some scholars regard Gurmat as a part of the philosophy espoused during the Bhakti movement.

Sufism and Gurmat:

The introduction of Islam in Punjab owing to the region's unstable polity, rich economic base and specific geographic location, preceded its introduction in the rest of India by almost two centuries. Islamic forces entered Punjab with the initial Muslim invaders including Muhammad bin Qasim(710A.D)and Mehmood Ghaznavi (997A.D-1030 A.D). Islamic principles and philosophy are all found in the Quran. The chief concepts on which Islamic philosophy dwells include: man, God, the relationship between man and God, the place of man in the world, his rights and duties and maintaining a balance in life (Habib 2005, p 66). One of the principal tenets of Islam revolves around treating all men equally since each one seeks and obtains life and sustenance from the one and only Allah (God). Islam considers man to be an independent and self-reliant entity and dwells on human welfare and lays down ways and means of leading a successful and comfortable life. The establishment of such a spiritual and idealistic way of life in the Quran makes it a focus of religious veneration on the one hand and a guide and key to leading an idealistic human life on the other hand. The mysticism in the principles of Islam was brought to the foreground by Sufism. This stream of Islam found much in common with Gurmat philosophy. Gurmat like Sufism challenges the institutionalized dimension of Islam. Sufism is devoted to the spread of Islamic values and principles and espoused a mystical form of Islam wherein love for God, importance of the Murshid (teacher) love and pangs of separation from the beloved (God) and realization of one's finite nature are the chief constructs that Sufis dwell on. The Sufi conceptualization of god as ***Wehelat-ul-wajood*** (the presence of the single One in all) believes in the one single all-pervading spirit. The path to attaining spiritual bliss, according to Sufism lies in maintaining the purity of heart and spirit,

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detachment from material desires, accepting the unquestioned direction of the Master and unquestioned love for God. In fact, Sufism is to Islam what the Bhakti movement is to Hinduism. It is no wonder then that concepts such as love for God, importance of Guru (teacher/mentor), the pain of separation from the true beloved (god) and the realization of destructibility of the human form all find resonance in Gurmat as do the composition of Sufi poets like Baba Sheikh Farid (1163-1266 A.D.).

Conclusions

To summarise, Gurmat emerges as an important link in the chain of the Indian philosophical tradition. Rooted in the social, political and cultural context of its time, it engages in a dialogic relationship with numerous strains of Indian Philosophy selectively rejecting or modifying and adopting or assimilating a variety of constructs from each of these strains. From Vedic philosophy Gurmat adopted the reverence of nature but modified the construct to appreciate nature as a manifestation and handiwork of the all-pervasive omnipotent Almighty. From the Upanishads Gurmat accepted the idea of soul as well as that of the supreme soul. The construct of Karma first enunciated in the Bhagwad Gita also finds an echo in Gurmat but instead of de-linking actions from the desire for reward, as in Bhagwad Gita, Gurmat sees salvation of the soul as the ultimate aim of human life and existence. The Nath Yogis strain of Indian philosophy gave Gurmat the concept of community kitchen (langer), the significance of meditation, transcendental music and the spiritual guide (gurus). With the Siddhas Guru Nanak engaged in numerous debates and discussions providing to Gurmat a logical and pragmatic dimension open to the application of reason. Gurmat finds most in common with the Bhakti movement particularly the idea of a loving and merciful Almighty and an egalitarian and pluralistic world view characterised by universal brotherhood and freed from kingly despotism as well as Brahmanical control. Sufism espoused the concepts of pure and unquestioned love for the Supreme Being as well as a purity of mind and soul and a reverence for the spiritual mentor (murshid); all of which find an echo in Gurmat.

Simultaneously, Gurmat rejects the ritualistic practices, idol worship and pursuit of material comfort espoused in Vedic philosophy, the construct of the tangible human form of the Almighty as accepted in the Bhagwat Gita and by some saints of the Bhakti Movement, the path of complete abstinence followed by the Nath Yogis and practices of tantra, voodoo and black magic practiced by the Siddhas. The low status accorded to women under the Nath Yogi Tradition is also denounced in Gurmat as is the use of intoxicants that Sufis sometimes resorted to.

In this manner Gurmat responding to the needs of the time seeks to construct a 'Gurmukh', a person who walks the path

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shown by the Guru, a person who is known by three salient characteristics: meditation ***(naam japna)***, honest labour ***(kirt karni)*** and sharing with fellow humans ***(vand shakhna)***. Gurmat thus includes all that is pragmatic, logical and reasonable in the philosophical strains that were contemporaneous as well as those that preceded it. The unique significance of Gurmat lies in the fact that since the source of schools of thought that pre-dated and preceded Gurmat thought and literature were rooted in the oral tradition these have often been the focus of much debate regarding their origin and authenticity. Gurmat on the other hand was always maintained in the Sri Guru Granth Sahib in the form of recorded written word. Its authenticity has been secured in the process of its compilation. This contribution made by the compilers of the Sri Guru Granth Sahib has virtually made it the first authentic religious compilation of the world. □

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The Vedas and Guru Granth Sahib: A Philosophic Interface

*Dr. Kirpal Singh (New Zealand)**

A controversial dialogue keeps coming again and again asserting superiority of one religion or the other more specifically Vedantic Philosophy (Sanatan Dharma) over Gurmat (Gurbani) or vice versa.

All religious/spiritual paths help make human life meaningful and happy and one can give different names to attainable spiritual states.

Vedantic Philosophy served the humanity well till some rituals overpowered the core messages by the practices of the Philosophy over the time. A number of barriers (like original language and traditions) over a long span of period have helped to dilute or corrode the significance of the Vedantic Philosophy. Practioners of Sanatan Dharma do acknowledge this. There are very few good Hindus who believe in Vedantic Philosophy rest simply think that the Hinduism is just a way of life.

However, the knowledge of Vedas is like "an Internal Combustion Engine (ICE) in automobiles". All the cars are run on the principle of this ICE. However, when you go to buy a car you look for various other features such as: fuel consumption per KM, maximum speed, increasing degree of automation, safety standards, internal upholstery, body strength and auxiliary fittings of convenience and entertainment etc etc. in a car of your choice.

Sikhi on the other hand which thrives on Gurmat (drawn from teachings of Gurbani) has relevant elements of all religious philosophies and practices before Guru Nanak Sahib. Gurbani openly acknowledges good points of Vedas and Shastras and also condemns the useless practices (empty rituals) that became manifested among the masses.

Gurbani does not spare in condemning any empty rituals that were prevalent during Sikh Guru's time. While the Sikhs do pay attention to condemned rituals of Hindus and Muslims but at the same time do not relax in attracting rituals in Sikhism as well, thus defeating the core message of Gurbani: ਨਾਮ ਤੁਲਿ ਕਛੁ ਅਵਰੁ ਨ ਹੋਇ ॥

[Raag Gauri M. 5, SGGS: 265-8]

"Naam Tul Kach Aver Na Hoe II"

There is nothing equal to the Naam.

ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਪਾਵੈ ਜਨੁ ਕੋਇ ॥੮॥੨॥

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Naanak Guramukh Naam Paavai Jan Koe ||8||2||

O Nanak, rare are those, who, as Gurmukh, obtain the Naam. ||8||2||

In Sikhi, unless one gets Naam all other activities amounts to waste of time and are empty rituals as in other religions. We need to examine as how many of us are on the right path? While the goal is clear and can be achieved with grace of Waheguru as 'Gurparsad', the path itself is also very lucrative with blessings of different kinds even when we are short of destination.

Gurbani does show a definite spiritual path leading to 'Gobind Milan' (blissful enlightenment) but at the same time does not put a seal that it is the only path. Therefore, people are free to explore any other paths suggested by a Spiritual Gurus provided the Gurus attained the necessary enlightenment through that paths.

On listening to informed devotees of other religions / faiths, I invariably end up in finding myself in a position of stronger resolve about truths in Gurbani (Gurmat).

I have a firm conviction that anyone who knows his/her religion well does easily attract goodness from other religions/faiths while easily filtering the insignificant differences.

With Punjabi as my mother tongue, I feel at ease to grasp the essence of Gurbani. And more so I love Gurbani for the following reasons while respecting scriptures of ALL other faiths and religions:-

1. Gurbani is fairly recent, written in a language well understood by me.

2. The authors of various compositions are well known to have lived like human-beings and then evolved spiritually through an enlightened Guru/Gursabd..

3. All the authors admit that a Divine Grace helped them to say what they said. I trust them as 'gentlemen'. They all believed and practiced Truth-fullness:

ਸਚਹੁ ਓਰੈ ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਉਪਰਿ ਸਚੁ ਆਚਾਰੁ ॥੫॥

[Sri Raag M. 1, SGGS: 62-11]

Sachahu Ourai Sabh Ko Oupar Sach Aachaar ||5||

Truth is higher than everything; but higher still is truthful living. ||5||

4. The truths, promises and instructions in Gurbani of Guru Granth Sahib were tested by ten Sikh Gurus; and the 1st to 5th and 9th Sikh Gurus, Bhagats and Mahapurakhs, whose compositions are included in the Guru Granth Sahib have collaborated on the unity of theme of Gurmat.

5. There is historical account that all the Sikh Gurus practiced and demonstrated the divinity in Gurbani in their day to day real life.

6. The Gurbani was tested for a period of about 240 years before it was handed

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down as Guru Granth Sahib by Guru Gobind Singh Ji in 1708.

7. Gurbani was revealed in Kal-Yug by Kal-Yugi Gurus to save Kal-Yugi human beings. It is indeed bad luck of those those who turn away from Gurbani that it belongs only to the Sikhs and not to them.

8. All the Gursikhs who are/were imbued with Gurbani guide us the spirit of Seva, Sacrifices and Humility that illuminates/ illuminated their personalities.

9. I am able to comprehend other faiths and religions better because of some understanding of Gurbani.

10. Gurbani does not say that it is the last word about God (Waheguru) rather says that '***Sahib mera neet nawan***' (God is fresh and new every day).

11. Gurbani encourages me to look out for 'Satsangat' - congregation of spiritually elevated persons of all the faiths and religions and not restricting to only Sikh Gurmukhs.

12. Personally, Gurbani helps me to communicate with you otherwise I would be talking only chemistry (my professional subject).

13. With Gurbani background, I shall be tempted to accept any other religion or faith that offers me more than the above mentioned posts to hold on to - That is why I love Gurbani!

When I go to a Mandir, Mosque, Church or Gurdwara, I find the message is pretty the same i. e. God is all-in-all, He is Love and is present in all of (***toon ghat ghat antar sarab nirantar jee, har eko purakh samana).*** All religions teach Universal Brotherhood of mankind and attract us towards Divine Sojhee/Budbebik (Naam). - ***"Naam sang jis ka man maneiaa, Nanak tine Niranjan janeiaa"*** (Sukhmani Sahib).

Regarding social practices, the environment plays an important role e. g. when we were in India surrounded by Hindus were naturally part of Hindu festivity; we spent 12 years in Nigeria in a predominantly Muslim state where we took part in Eids and Salahs and now when we live in New Zealand we do enthusiastically live in Christmas festivity - we have put up a Christmas tree in our house as mark of the festive season. All this does not stop us to celebrate Guru Nanak Dev Ji's Prakash utsav (we had a prayer and feast at home and also joined the Sangat at Wellington Gurdwara Sahib later on a Sunday), Vaisakhi and other important days in Sikh-calendar.

We usually put up lights on our house around Diwali and the same stays on and is lighted again on Guru Nanak Dev Ji's Prakash utsav followed by on Christmas - without causing any conflict in our firm faith in Gurbani. ❑

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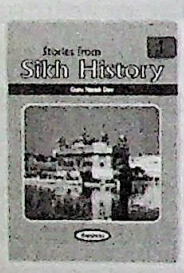


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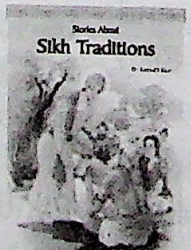


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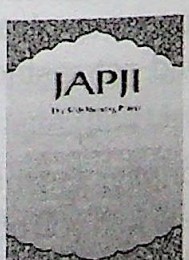
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Three Pillars of a Fulfilled Life

*HARBANS LAL, PHD., D.LIT. (HONS).**

Many research studies on the purpose of life indicate that every living human being is seeking fulfillment as their most cherished purpose. A recent survey concluded that, more and more, North Americans tend to live lives driven by their most precious goals. They continue to be physically active and otherwise engaged in achieving the goals they cherish.

This essential purpose of fulfillment is becoming the primary preoccupation of every conscientious person. Therefore, we must evaluate the characteristics of those objectives to understand if they will enable our communities to have purposeful lives.

To help the ordinary citizen in achieving this goal, Guru Nanak evolved three categories of core values to live by. These core values were the central theme during his wide-ranging missionary endeavors. Both he and his nine successors detailed in their teachings the kinds of actions that would constitute the three categories, and create a fulfilling human life.

In his teachings, Guru Nanak designated three core values that, when blended, would transform life into something wonderful. In doctrinal terms, Guru Nanak named them as NAAM, DAAN, ISHNAAN. Translated into today's idiom, they are:

- **NAAM** – Mindful Awareness of Divine Presence
- **DAAN** – Live Out the Culture of Altruism when Seeking Divine Benevolence
- **ISHNAAN** – Implement Ethics of Good Deeds that Cleanse Body and Mind

I hope to dedicate considerable time to write several essays exploring what these doctrines mean. They are detailed in Sikh scriptures. In this essay, I will only review the scriptural authority as well as historical evidence in support of whether NAAM-DAAN-ISHNAAN was indeed the terminology the Gurus selected to communicate their primary teachings. I will also review how these heavenly terms have been altered into newer vocabulary that the Gurus neither ordained nor spoke. However, this more recent vocabulary is being adopted subtly by our clergy, entirely out of ignorance.

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ORIGIN AND GROUNDWORK

The principles of the Sikh Rehat, which are guidelines for daily practice, first originated in Guru Nanak's teachings. The Guru spread the divine message to all those coming to him and thus laid the groundwork for a universal Code of Conduct (Rehat Maryada). This code was meant to be timeless and meant for everyone without any prejudice of race, religion, gender or nationality. It is a comprehensive guide to living pertinently for every member of humanity.

As the tradition goes, the original code of values was summed up by the Guru himself in three theological terms, NAAM DAAN ISNAAN (ਨਾਮੁ, ਦਾਨੁ, ਇਸਨਾਨੁ). In every opportunity to transmit his ministry, the Guru emphasized a lifestyle based upon these precepts. For example, this was the first pronouncement of his ministry after his enlightening meditation along the banks of the rivulet vein nadi, at the age of 27.

The enlightening meditation around ***"vein nadi"*** is considered the most significant event in the life of the founder of the Sikh religion [1]. Historians describe this event as the occasion immediately after which Guru Nanak undertook his universal ministry. It is then that he spoke to the public and pronounced that he was inspired by the Creator with messages for all humanity.

Referring to this message, the writers of the oldest available Sikh history, ancient Meharban Vaalee JanamSakhi, described the Divine instructions to the Guru as saying,

O' Nanak, those you accept, will be given salvation in the court of the Divine, ..you are ordained to undertake the mission of both articulating and inculcating the practice of NAAM DAAN ISNAAN in the millennium of the coming ages [2]...

In recorded Sikh history, it is from this event and time that the NAAM DAAN ISNAAN terms were rightfully regarded as representing the core doctrines of Sikhism. The same doctrines were routinely preached in the Sikh congregations, and a lot has been written about their meanings and implications in life.

Following this event of vein nadi, the sacred terms, NAAM DAAN ISNAAN (ਨਾਮੁ, ਦਾਨੁ, ਇਸਨਾਨੁ) were made a part of the Gurmat philosophy, and Sikh values. Thereafter, the Gurus and other Sikh theologians as well as Sikh exegists actively popularized these terms and the teachings behind them. From this time onward, these terms and the concepts they represented would continue to be recognized as the fundamentals of Sikhism. They were variously translated and explained with the changing times according to the needs of the local languages and customs. This is not unusual. With the changing socio-political milieu, with the

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cultural as well as the etymological needs, it is expected that, with time, more contemporary terms would be employed to express the essence of the original diction and basic concepts contained in Nanak's three canons.

The evolution of terminology is expected with time; however, a great caution must be exercised to preserve the original terms and their meanings as they embody the canons and the doctrines. When newer terms are introduced, they may subtly begin to taint the original significance of the canons to accommodate the expression of many cultural and geographical needs. Once accepted, the subtle changes have a tendency to introduce distortions of the original meaning.

To guard against any long-lasting variation in the essence of the terms, it must be emphasized periodically that the basic principles must be referred to by the original doctrinal terms coined by the founders themselves; or by those subsequently authenticated by the Gurus themselves; or done so by their contemporary theologians.

SCRIPTURAL SANCTITY OF NAAM-DAAN ISHAAN

Sikhs consider the verses contained in the volume of Sri Guru Granth Sahib (SGGS) as the Eternal Guru whose wisdom mus not be contested. It is these verses that provide indisputable support for the terms that Guru Nanak had chosen. They are then promoted by the Guru's contemporary theologians and exegetists. Let us examine those documents.

THE GURU'S OWN SERMONS

Above all the other supporting evidence, the Gurus themselves emphasized the rehat of NAAM DAAN ISNAAN. For instance, the Guru wrote down the terms in their own verses as,

ਸੁਣਿ ਗਲਾ ਗੁਰ ਪਹਿ ਆਇਆ ॥ ਨਾਮੁ ਦਾਨੁ ਇਸਨਾਨੁ ਦਿੜਾਇਆ ॥ ਸਭੁ ਮੁਕਤੁ ਹੋਆ ਸੈਸਾਰੜਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਚੀ ਬੇੜੀ ਚਾੜਿ ਜੀਉ ॥੧੧॥ [SGGS: 74]

I heard of the Guru's repute, and so I went to the Guru. The Guru instilled within me the teaching of Naam, Daan, Isnaan. Said Nanak, this was the path through which whole humanity may be liberated as the way of Naam, Daan, Isnaan puts the seeker on the boat of eternal truths.

ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਦਾਨੁ ਇਸਨਾਨੁ ॥ [SGGS: 942]

The Guru-Oriented seekers receive the wisdom of " NAAM, DAAN, ISNAAN (ਨਾਮੁ, ਦਾਨੁ, ਇਸਨਾਨੁ) to attune to the blissful state.

ਨਾਮੁ ਦਾਨੁ ਇਸਨਾਨੁ ਦ੍ਰਿੜੁ ਹਰਿ ਭਗਤਿ ਸੁ ਜਾਗੇ ॥੭॥ [SGGS: 419]

The devout is awakened to the Worship of the Divine with firm faith in the lifestyle of " NAAM DAAN ISNAAN"

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ਦ੍ਰਿੜੁ ਨਾਮ ਦਾਨੁ ਇਸਨਾਨੁ ਸੁਚਾਰੀ ॥੩॥ [SGGS: 740]

Instill in your life, NAAM DAAN AND ISNAAN as the acts of piousness.

When the Guru found an occasion to deliver his sermon, he used those opportunities to stress his mission. He emphasized the principles of his new religion irrespective of the faith of the audience. For example, on two premier holy festivals of Hindus, both Guru Nanak and Guru Arjan preached as follows.

ਦਸਮੀ ਨਾਮੁ ਦਾਨੁ ਇਸਨਾਨੁ ॥ [SGGS: 840]

On the day of Dasami observance, dedicate yourself to the life of NAAM DAAN AND ISNAAN.

ਦੁਆਦਸੀ ਦਾਨੁ ਨਾਮੁ ਇਸਨਾਨੁ ॥ [SGGS: 299]

On the day of Duadsi observance, commit yourself to the practice of NAAM DAAN AND ISNAAN.

The Guru instructed the Sikh theologians to use NAAM DAAN ISNAAN as subjects for their exegeses.

ਨਾਮੁ ਦਾਨੁ ਇਸਨਾਨੁ ਦਿੜੁ ਸਦਾ ਕਰਹੁ ਗੁਰ ਕਥਾ ॥ [SGGS: 1101]

Confirm your faith in the NAAM DAAN ISNAAN, and always use these topics for exegeses.

As far as we know, like other Gurus, Guru Gobind Singh continued the tradition of using the terms: "NAAM, DAAN, ISNAAN." There are several references to them in the Guru's teachings.

It is thus clear that the terms employed to describe the three pillars of the Sikh way of life were never allowed to any alteration in over two centuries of the Gurus' lives. It is not wise, therefore, to permit any change now. This certainly does not preclude any restriction, however, on translating them into contemporary idioms when necessary, as long as the original terms are not forgotten.

TESTIMONY OF BHAI GURDAS

Bhai Gurdas (1551 – 1636) was Guru Arjun's scribe who compiled the first recension of the Guru Granth. Bhai Gurdas was the son of Datar Chand Bhalla, a first cousin of Guru Amar Das; his cousin's sister, Bibi Bhani, was married to Guru Ram Das and was the mother of Guru Arjan. This made Bhai Gurdas the maternal uncle of Guru Arjan. Thus, Bhai Gurdas may be considered the Sikh best connected to the Gurus' family and the Guru's teachings. Also, he had a singular privilege of living through the time up to the sixth Guru and is considered the first missionary of Sikh philosophy and mysticism.

Bhai Gurdas wrote extensively on the Gurmat philosophy and the Sikh way of life. Guru Arjan designated Bhai Gurdas's writings as the key to the Guru Granth Sahib. In this capacity, Bhai Gurdas was the first to outline Guru's own instructions on the

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theology and morality of the Sikh community in the Gurus' time and for the times to come.

Bhai Gurdas elected to include his testimony on the injunctions of NAAM DAAN ISNAAN (ਨਾਮੁ, ਦਾਨੁ, ਇਸਨਾਨੁ) in his very first Pauri or verse. This pauri was composed as an homage to the founder of the religion, Guru Nanak, and as an overview of his composition. It goes as follows:

ਭਾਉ ਭਗਤਿ ਗੁਰਪੁਰਬ ਕਰਿ ਨਾਮ ਦਾਨ ਇਸਨਾਨ ਦ੍ਰਿੜ੍ਹਾਯਾ [3]

I bow to Guru Nanak who transformed his followers world into those who continually rededicate themselves to the Guru's principles through the celebration of the Guru's greatness and emphasize on others the Guru's path of NAAM DAAN ISNAAN.

Similarly, when Bhai Gurdas narrated the foundation of the Panth, he included the injunctions of NAAM DAANISNAAN as its essential component.

ਗੁਰਮੁਖ ਪੰਥੁ ਚਲਾਉਨੁ ਨਾਮੁ ਦਾਨੁ ਇਸਨਾਨੁ ਦ੍ਰਿੜਾਯਾ [4]

The Guru founded the path of Guru oriented by emphasizing NAAM DAAN ISNAAN

Further, when Bhai Gurdas described the teachings that Guru asked his followers to abide by, it contained NAAM DAAN ISNAAN as a critical component.

ਪਰਤਨ ਪਰਧਨ ਪਰਨਿੰਦ ਮੇਟਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਦਾਨੁ ਇਸਨਾਨੁ ਦ੍ਰਿੜਾਇਆ ॥ [5]

You must extinguish any evil eye on other's body, on other's wealth or badmouthing of others, then adopt the path of NNAM DAAN ISHNAAN

Among the virtues that the Guru had emphasized included; to be truthful, content, merciful, religious and the practitioner of NAAM, DAAN, AND ISNAAN, as in the following verse.

ਸਤਿ ਸੰਤੋਖ ਦਯਾ ਧਰਮ ਨਾਮ ਦਾਨ ਇਸਨਾਨ ਦ੍ਰਿੜਾਯਾ [6]

For inculcating the Truth, fulfillment, mercy and divinity, the Guru emphasized NAAM DAAN ISNAAN

Bhai Gurdas considered the practice of NAAM DAANISNAAN as a fulfillment of the Guru's teachings. He wrote,

ਗੁਰ ਉਪਦੇਸ਼ ਕਮਾਵਣਾ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਨਾਮ ਦਾਨ ਇਸਨਾਨਾ [6]

To a Guru oriented individual, the practice of NAAM DAAN ISNAAN constitutes the fulfillment of Guru's teachings.

TESTIMONY OF BHAI NAND LAL

Bhai Nand Lal was the Poet Laureate of Guru's court and the most dearly loved disciple of Guru Gobind Singh. He wrote two *Rehatnamas*; one known as *Rehatnama* written in 1695, i.e., four years before the presently most celebrated Vaisakhi of 1699, and the other in 1699 known as *Tankhahnama.*

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Guru Gobind Singh himself asked Nand Lal to compile Guru's injunctions for the guidance of the Sikh communities after the Guru left his human body for his heavenly abode. Both *Rehatnama* and *Tankhahnama* were believed to be written under the personal guidance of Guru Gobind Singh. These pieces were composed in the style of a conversation between the Guru and Bhai Nand Lal.

In these compositions, Guru Gobind Singh asked Bhai Nand Lal to convey to the Sikhs the following message for inclusion in their daily code of conduct.

ਸੁਨਹੁ ਭਾਈ ਨੰਦ ਲਾਲ ਜੀ ਸਿਖ ਕਰਮ ਹੈ ਇਹੁ ॥ ਨਾਮ ਦਾਨੁ ਇਸਨਾਨੁ ਬਿਨੁ ਕਰੇ ਨ ਅੰਨ ਸਿਉ ਨੇਹੁ ॥ [7]

Listen, O, my dear Bhai Nand Lal, the religious deeds of the Sikhs are defined as follows – but for NAAM, DAAN, ISNAAN, a Sikh should not form an association with anything else.

After perusing the testimonies above, there should be no question or doubt that NAAM, DAAN, ISNAAN were the major doctrines and the doctrinal terms that form all of the Sikh teachings.

REPLACEMENT OF ORIGINAL TERMS: ORIGIN AND IMPLICATIONS

A cursory view of current trends in Sikh publications, youth programs, and other ceremonies reveals that the essence of certain textual canons of Sikh principles may be gradually altering without any one's notice. The Guru's principles of NAAM DAAN ISNAAN (ਨਾਮੁ, ਦਾਨੁ, ਇਸਨਾਨੁ)[8] are being substituted by virtually non-Gurbani terms to suit the convenience and circumstances. Whereas the motives of the writers and speakers may be genuine, there is a risk of tainting the fundamental canons of Sikhism with the passage of time.

Other terms which are becoming more popular in the Punjabi regions of the Indian sub-continent to describe the Guru's three precepts are ***Naam Japo, Vand Chhako, Kirat Karo,*** instead of NAAM, DAAN, ISHNAAN. These are newer terms that Guru never spoke or wrote; they were coined during the post-Guru periods and only recently. The time of their exact origin is not known, but I have a hunch. They certainly came to exist only after the partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947.

Very different terms erroneously considered equivalent to represent the same ideas were mentioned by Bhai Mani Singh. But he used each of them separately, never troika of three words. It is a common belief that BhaiVir Singh allowed the use of these terms naam japo, vand chhako, dharam di kirat karo only to blunt Communist influence on the Sikh Youth, and never to replace the original doctrines. The motivation was to stress that Sikhism had already imbibed two major slogans of the Communist movement. And Sikhism goes beyond that, by

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emphasizing a belief in God to which Communism was opposed.

I distinctly recall this point being highlighted in the Sikh youth gatherings by the All India Sikh Students Federation, and other Sikh activist movements, myself being included and enthusiastically part of it. The idea was noble. It was to not permit heavily propagated communism to impact our youth. All the youth leaders supported the idea and heavily emphasized these points in our presentations.

Although the intention at that time was laudable, and it served its purpose well, the vast popularity of these new terms gradually began to erode the originals NAAM DAAN ISNAAN doctrines. The newer terms, naam japo, vand chhako, dharam di kirat karo that were only meant to halt communist inroads, over time began to corrupt the original intention. Some authors even unwittingly started to go astray in their exposition while explaining the terms in the context of their own understanding. They would preach these words of naam japo, vand chhako, dharam di kiratkaro as if they the original injunctions of the Gurus. But certainly that is not true. None of the ten gurus ever spoken those terms as a troika. However, the temporarily employed terms became to enter encyclopedias and other literature. That need to be halted and discouraged whenever there is opportunity to do so.

CONCLUSION

It was Guru Nanak who gave us the divinely inspired guidelines towards a most fulfilled life. All his successors and the exegetes of the time actively promoted the same, so we may live our life in the most fulfilled way. We continued to follow the Guru for centuries afterward.

A cursory view of the present trend in Sikh publications, youth programs, and other ceremonies reveals that the essence of certain textual canons of Sikh principles may be gradually losing the original intention of the Guru without any one's notice. The Guru's principles of NAAM DAAN ISNAAN (ਨਾਮੁ, ਦਾਨੁ, ਇਸਨਾਨੁ) [9] are being substituted by virtually non-Gurbani phrases to suit the convenience and circumstances. Whereas the motives of those who are popularizing the much-altered terms may be genuine, there is a risk of tainting the Gurmat doctrines this way with the passage of time.

To halt this erosion of the real intention of the Guru, it is prudent to favor references to the doctrinally precise words chosen by the Gurus themselves. It is for this reason that this author decided to cite the original testimonies of the Scriptures in support of the correct representation of these terms. They were for sure, NAAM DAAN ISNAAN (ਨਾਮੁ, ਦਾਨੁ, ਇਸਨਾਨੁ) and none else. It is certainly time for the leadership of our institutions to actively stop the erosion of Gurus' given original terms by preserving

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and actively propagating their usage again.

Future essays will delve into our current understanding of the Guru's teachings as defined in his spiritually inspired doctrines of NAAM DAAN ISNAAN (ਨਾਮੁ, ਦਾਨੁ, ਇਸਨਾਨੁ). It will also be deliberated that the doctrines embedded in these terms are meant for universal application in today's civil societies. ❑

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9] For detailed discussion on the meanings of these terms see, Harbans Lal, The Three Pillars of Spiritual Living, From Both sides of the Ocean, January-February Issue, 16-19, 1996.

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Sikhism on the Rise in Pakistan

*GURCHARAN SINGH, LONDON**

The growth of Sikhism is renewing in Pakistan with great enthusiasm. Greater good deeds by Sikhs at international level, the success of Sikhs in other countries, the growing numbers of Sikh converts in the west is influencing the suppressed Hindu communities in Pakistan.

That aside, the negative activities of detractors and their fake books, and increasing violent dramas in Gurdwaras has not yet dampened the would be Sikhs in Pakistan. **The Pakistani Sikh converts are influenced more by the positive message of Guru Granth Sahib, and this regenerates their confidence and image in Pakistan, as a Sikh.** They found that being Sikhs it gave them multiple praxis to dignity, esteem and empowers them as individuals and as Sikhs.

Hinduism is looked upon negatively, in Pakistan, because when in India, the fanatical Hindu right wingers - RSS create issues of divide and rule among minorities and take their anger out on Muslims and Dalits, there is a reaction among the Muslim nations towards such atrocities being committed upon the minorities.

It is no different in Pakistan, as the Muslims react towards the Hindus in Pakistan. The Hindu society does not feel safe within Pakistan, in most circumstances, but especially so, when they are harassed as result of RSS activities in India.

There are many instances and reports of young Hindu girls being abducted and forcefully indulged into Nikkah .There are countless instances when attack upon Hindus has taken place.

But such has not taken place against Sikhs, bar a few cases from the tribal Taliban infested areas, where some Sikh victims have been reported too, along with thousands of Muslim victims. The tribal areas generally have no Hindu population.

The Muslim brotherhood regards the Sikhs as people of the Book, and believers of ONE God, like themselves. They recognise Sikhi demands goodwill and respect towards all humanity both in words and actions. They also understand that the philosophy of Guru Granth sahib is very much closer to the Koran. They have much respect for Sikhs and regard them very

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disciplined and honourable society of people.

Thus, such conditions, has created a bee line for many Hindus to adopt Sikhism readily. A recent BBC, report investigation into the religions of Pakistan 2017, confirmed the rising conversion of Hindus into Sikhism, not only in Sindh, but Khairpur, and Balochistan.

In 1947, the entire Sikh population had left Sind. But now, in a Karachi suburb, of Oop Ngri, lives Sd. Krishan Singh, who previously was a Hindu, and worshipper of Ram Chander and various Gods like Mahakaal , Durga Devi etc.

Not too long back, about 10 years ago, he along with his two sons, four brothers, and two nephews initiated into the Sikh religion.

Sd. Krishna Singh admits that since they adopted Sikhism, their relations with the local authorities and the surrounding Muslim society has improved tremendously, and they are very respectfully addressed as SARDAR SAHIB, and looked upon with great awe and not with contempt or opposition.

It does not stop there, socially they have very cordial relationship with Muslims and they are invited to intermingle in Muslim marriages, and get together, where vegetarian foods are prepared for them, specially.

Sd. Krishan Singh says "When we were Hindus, we were never regarded with much respect. Often sent to Coventry, in our presence."

The population of Krishan Singh's surburb was initially all Hindu, but currently there are 40 Sikh families, who have all adopted Sikhism from Hinduism. Most of the people are from Baghrri sub castes. The building of a very large Gurdwara is taking place, currently, supported by funding from expatriate Sikhs. The Gurdwara will be able to seat 500 people.

Duruu Singh is the jathedar of this Gurdwara and locality. Duruu Singh says, that whenever Hindus go in jathas to Nankana Sahib and meet the foreign Sikhs who have arrived; they get very influenced by the love shown by these foreign Sikhs that many on return decide to also adopt Sikh faith.

He goes on to say, that often, stones and garbage are thrown at the statues of devis and devtas, by the local Muslim population. Often, abuse also takes place of the statues, and individual persons of Hindu community. But such actions are NOT committed against Gurdwaras or the visible Sikhs.

This is why Hindus and dalits in Pakistan are increasingly adopting the Sikh faith. During recent gurpurab of Guru Gobind Singh, the police was made available to

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ensure Sikhs could celebrate the ***Nagar-Kirtan*** without any issue. No issues even rose as the local Muslims joined together with Sikhs in the celebration. Hindu festivals cannot be celebrated openly.

Karachi's Aram bagh Gurdwara, has been now opened after 24 year long legal case, and Sikhs have started thronging that Gurdwara. Before 1947, there were over 7 Gurdwaras in Karachi, but have been run down due to lack of care. Duruu Singh says, if all these Gurdwaras are re-opened , Sikh numbers will certainly increase.

A Sardar Hira Singh is an advocate, in the High Court of Sind. He converted to Sikhism long time ago, says that about 1100 people from the Dalit brotherhood have converted to Sikhism through his own private efforts in the last 5 years. He teaches them the messages of Guru Granth sahib, care and love for humanity and hard work-thus 1100 have become SARDARS. These were people who even the Hindus rejected and would not offer their glasses to drink water from. Now everybody refers to them as SARDAR JI.....Sardar sahib.

There is a substantial Hindu minority in Sind, who believes in Guru Nanak Ji. There is a Guru Granth in many mandirs along with the statues of mahakal, durga devi or Ram Chander.

Now, as the increasing Sikh population is building their separate Gurdwaras, there is no such pooja or duality of worshipping mythology or puranic verses. Sr Hira Singh says, that he preaches Sikhs do NOT worship idols or puranic teachings. New converts take that seriously, and concentrate upon the sole teachings of Guru Granth sahib, Gurbani ONLY.

The leader of Pakistan Hindu Council Mangla Sharma, grudgingly accepts that there is a substantial scale conversion going on among Hindus into Sikhism. He also admits that this is not an organised conversion, but people initiating into Sikhism out of their own free will. He says that 20-25 years ago, there was NOT a single VISIBLE Sikh to be seen in SIND, nor there ever a seat for Sikhs in the National Assembly of Sind, all this has changed now.

He goes on to say that from 2000, many good Sikh deeds hit the news headlines, people started taking notice of the Sikh religion. The people who adopted the Sikh religion soon found it was to their advantage to be Sikhs, both in community and also politically in government, and as said already it offered them multiple opportunities to enrichen and enhance their own standing and quality of life in Pakistan

Mangal goes on to say, the teachings of Sikhism are very universal and it can be seen the Sikhs are a very cohesive community and support each other closely both in business and other aspects of life.

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They are on a very positive financial footing and well respected among Muslims and the government.

Also in recent times, the Sikhs took a leading role, in a case in Sind high court against alcohol prohibition with great success, and earning respect among Muslims.

Secondly, there was census box for Sikhs in the National Census, now they have won that right too, which has boosted the morale of the Sikhs.

Finally Mangal says that the success of Sikhs in foreign western and other countries has filtered through, which has created an impressive image of being Sikhs, has persuaded many to convert to Sikhism in Pakistan. □

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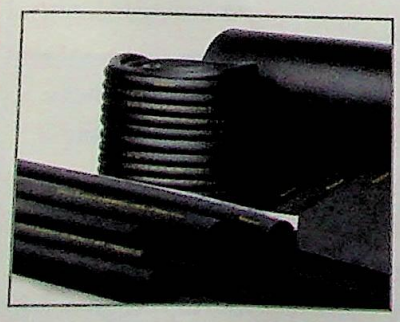


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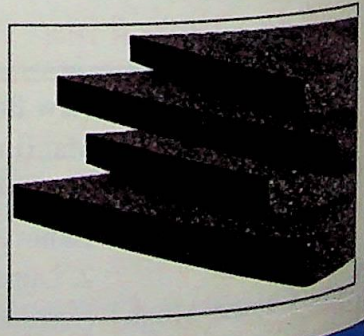
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The "Baba" culture- challenges for Sikhism - Where do we go from here -

*Baljeet Singh**

It is an established norm in India that unless and until there is a major catastrophe, neither the society nor the government is moved or awakened. The awakening if any is also short lived; till such time as there is another catastrophe, to make headlines and to sell the news.

No one talks of anti-corruption crusade of Anna Hazare or the Nirbhaya gang rape case or Baba Asaram's case or Baba Rampal's case or the death of hundreds of infants in UP due to non availability of oxygen or the issue of Rohingya Muslims. These don't make news and these news can't be sold now.

The conviction and arrest of Baba Ram Rahim and the large scale violence and arson that followed it, is another such incident. In another few months it would no longer make news.

A lot has been discussed, both in electronic as well as print media about Baba culture prevalent in entire India. In Punjab and Haryana, the impact of Baba culture is deep and widespread.

How it all started? When and Why?

We have to ponder over the issue. In a nation of 1.3 billion people, with diverse cultures; deep rooted and blind faith in religion based on superstitions and rituals; lack of modern education; extremely strong caste basis which has divided the society; approx. more than 50% population is economically, socially and educationally marginalised and deprived; the conditions are highly conducive for evolving and sustaining complex problems. The emergence of Baba culture is one such malady, which has evolved under the existing circumstances.

Casteism in India is deep rooted having general acceptance of the society and it is as old as Indian civilisation itself. The division of the so called upper and lower castes helps to maintain dominance of upper castes. The system suits the so called

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'Brahmin class'. The system also suits the present political set-up of the country. In Punjab and Haryana, entire land ownership is with the upper caste 'Jats'. The lower castes have remained labourers, deprived socially, educationally and economically; used as vote banks by politicians of all the parties for the past 70 years.

The deprived section of the society remained deprived at religious places as well. They were not welcome at Hindu temples, not allowed at most temples. At village Gurudwaras also they were not welcome and faced discrimination. The situation in city Gurudwaras and historical Gurudwaras was definitely better, but the control and management of these Gurudwaras remained with upper caste Sikhs only. Historical Gurudwaras in Punjab and Haryana, being managed by SGPC, a political body mainly of Jat and upper caste Sikhs. The so called lower caste Sikhs having no role in SGPC, even though there are SC members, but only for namesake, to fulfil legal compliance and face saving. Similarly the non-historic city Gurudwaras having local committees, comprised mainly of rich and upper caste Sikhs. The condition in Hindu temples is worse. Only a Brahmin can be the priest and the management is of either Brahmins or upper caste Hindus. There is no place for so called lower castes in these temples. This exclusionary practice being adopted by Sikhs and Hindus, since long, has created a big vacuum in the society.

The rising aspirations of lower castes were not met, even partially, at these religious Institutions. After independence, the benefit of economic growth started reaching these lower castes and the deprived section of the society. There has also been substantial migration from lower castes to various countries, particularly from Punjab, raising their economic level and the exposure; which further increased their aspirations. However, the scenario at religious Institutions didn't change with time, to meet these rising aspirations. Under these circumstances people started looking at other avenues to fill the vacuum.

Thus, comes into the picture these Deras, headed by Babas. Everyone is welcome, irrespective of caste or creed or economic status. No one talks of that. Babas talking in simple language and giving sermons having religious and social significance. These Babas listening to your problems and giving solutions with their blessings. Babas asking that people pledge against alcohol or drugs, suited everyone. The followers get a feeling of security and belongingness at these Deras. Then these Babas involving themselves in various social activities, such as marriage of poor

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girls without dowry, organising blood donation camps, establishing old age homes, schools for poor children, tree plantation drives etc. These initiatives further boosted the credibility, acceptance and market of these Babas. It also helped in further enhancing their base and increasing membership. It is estimated that perhaps more than 80% of followers at these Deras are from lower castes and deprived sections of the society.

The more the upper caste people were inclined towards exclusionary practices adopted by them, greater was the growth of followers of these Deras.

The politicians were too happy to help these Deras; the promise of vote banks, politicians in return gave them all types of subsidies such as legal protection, immunities of all sorts and help in acquiring land even by illegal means. The vote bank politics of India has always encouraged anti-social elements, to help win elections; the sole objective of all political parties and Nation's interest being side-lined, rather crushed. Eventually, these Deras were encouraged, protected and supported by political leadership of the country.

All the prominent Deras of Punjab and Haryana, viz, Sacha Sauda, Nirankari, Radha Soami, Noormahal, Ravidasia, Divyajyoti, Bhaniarwala etc etc, became powerful and rich over a period of time, with political blessings.

Now, with the large follower base, so many branches, large land holdings, financial strength and political backing; these Deras have a larger role in the society. Even though Asaram, Narainswami, Rampal and Ram Rahim (in jail) and criminal cases against various Babas, the set back in all probability would be a temporary one keeping in mind the complex socio-economic and religio-political scenario of the Indian society. A small percentage of followers of Ram Rahim may desert him, may tilt to Radha Soami or Nirankari or other Deras. Loss to one Dera is a gain to another Dera. It sounds strange but it is the harsh reality of Dera culture.

In addition, there are thousands of small or village Deras in Punjab. Most of them headed by Sikhs and by and large following Sikh Maryada. Number of followers of these Deras vary from few hundred to thousands, but most of them having local influence. There may be certain aberrations at these Deras but it would not be appropriate to touch that issue at this juncture as it would defeat the very purpose of the fight with the evil. Moreover, we should not forget that there are certain aberrations at various Sikh Institutions and historical Gurudwaras also. Thus, the real issue should not be diluted by opening all the fronts.

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But now where do we go from here? What options Sikh society has at this juncture? Would it be possible to check the rot?

Yes, a beginning has to be made. We need not be pessimistic, that it is too late or the problem is complex and wide spread with political backing. We fortunately have large number of Institutions, an intellectual class and committed workers along with well established platforms having credibility, which can make a difference.

The first and foremost task is that SGPC has to change. We have to collectively persuade them to change and to rectify the errors committed by them in the last several decades. The changes in outlook and working of SGPC should not be merely a cosmetic one, but revolutionary changes for the overall wellbeing of the community. A genuine transformation is required. This apex body has to send a clear cut unambiguous message that it is sincere and will allow active participation of all sections of Sikhs at all levels, management and preaching. Inclusive meausres are to be adopted. The large number of Gurudwaras all over Northern India is an added advantage. This base is to be used to spread the Guru's message that we do not discriminate on grounds of caste and economic status of people in Sikhism. Here all are equal and welcome.

This message is to go down the line in a proper manner, particularly through the village Gurudwaras. All this needs to be monitored by SGPC by creating a special cell, which should operate actively, with participation of local committees of the Gurudwaras. It may sound big, but it is not difficult, only there has to be a 'Will'.

If we can organise langars in extremely tough situations in Nepal, Uttarakhand, Burma or even in USA; why can't we take it as a challenge. If we can make a beginning now, we can clean the system in the next, say, 10 years. It will drastically change the scenario with general acceptance and respect of Sikhism increasing manifold. But at the same time, if we do not make a beginning now and start cleaning the system, the coming generations will never forgive us. We may never get this opportunity again.

Let us do an introspection. Involve all Sikh social and religious organisations, shed our ego, persuade SGPC, DSGPC, Nanded and Patna Sahib boards, to join hands, accept it as a challenge and check Baba and Dera culture. Let us spread the true message of our Gurus as enshrined in Sri Guru Granth Sahib.

May blessings of Waheguru be with us. □

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'MANJI' and MIRI-PIRI': Innovative Systems Introduced By Guru Amar Das Ji

*SURJAN SINGH, PBM, PBS, FRGS, BA (LOND)**

MANJI SYSTEM – APPOINTMENT OF MASANDS

The introduction of the Manji system (dioceses) was the brain-child of Guru Amar Dasji. The principal reason for this was to spread the tenets of Sikhism of Guru Nanak across Punjab and other parts of India and neighbouring countries under a logical and well-planned system of administration. To carry out his plan, Guru ji selected twenty-two of his most devoted men and women of noble and virtuous character. They were known as sangatias, but more popularly called masands.

The word "manji" refers to a low wooden cot on which the appointed masand would sit and teach the congregation the Sikh doctrines and principles. Together they would sing the "shabads" (hymns) of the Gurus. Sometimes, the masands would settle disputes to the satisfaction of the parties. Each diocese was responsible for the collection of offerings and "dasvand" from the devotees on behalf of Guru.

At this time, Goindwal was becoming a very busy place. An increasing number of Sikhs were coming to have a "darshan" of the Guru and to listen to his spiritual sermons. Money was needed for the community kitchen and to meet other miscellaneous expenditure. The need for money became more intense with the digging of *srowars* (tanks) and the construction of Harmandir Sahib and other temples and for their upkeep. It is said that Guru Arjan Devji had to further consolidate the Manji system by appointing more masands – carefully chosen for their piety, devotion and divine spirit. Besides their preaching duties, they carried the donations of the sangat, back to the Guru in Amritsar.

THE TWENTY-TWO MASANDS CHOSEN BY GURU AMAR DAS JI

It is interesting to know about the first twenty-two masands, selected by Guru Amar Das ji. One of them was a Pathan, who had become Guru's devoted Sikh. This points to the catholicity of Sikhism. (The names are arranged in alphabetical order).

1) Bhai Allah Yaar was a wealthy trader of horses between Delhi and Kabul. When he heard of Guru Amar Das ji, he came to

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visit him. He was so impressed by the humility, spiritual illumination and moral fervor of Guru ji that he gave up his trade and became a devout follower. He was entrusted with the first Manji to spread Sikhism in Delhi.

2) Bhai Beni was a learned Pundit, who was very proud of his book knowledge.He came to Goindwal with a load-full of books to debate with Guru ji. But on hearing the views of the Guru, he gave up his pride and became a devoted Sikh.

3) Bhai Bua became Guru's Sikh and was blessed by the Guru. He was selected to head a Manji.

4) Bhai Darbari was another devoted Gursikh of Guru Amar Das ji. He spread the message of Sikhism in his village of Majitha in Amritsar.

5) Bhai Gangu Shah became a devoted Sikh of Guru Angad Devji. He obtained spiritual merit through humble service and meditation. Guru Amar Das ji sent him to preach Sikhism in Sarmaur State.

6) Bhai Handal was from Jandiala village in Amritsar. He rendered great service in the community kitchen and was known as "Langgar Sewadar". On award of Manji, he spread Sikhism in and around Jandiala.

7) Bhai Kedari was from Batala. He received the rites of initiation from Guru AngadDevji. He was one of the Sikhs chosen by Guru Amar Das to accompany Bhai Jetha (Guru Ram Das) to the Mughal court to answer a complaint lodged by some jealous Brahmins against the teachings of Guru Nanak. Bhai Gurdas called him "*wadda bhagat*"– devotee par excellence.

8) Bhai Kheda was a strict Brahmin from Khem Karan. Initially, he used to make regular visits to Jawalamukhi to worship Goddess Durga. On one occasion, he broke journey to visit Guru Amar Das, but on learning that he had to first take langgar before seeing the Guru, he refused to do that being caste- conscious. It is said that later, he heard a voice admonishing him for refusing to take food from the community kitchen. He went back to Goindwal, ate the food and met the Guru. He became a devoted disciple and received the blessing from the Guru. He was made head of a Manji.

9) Bhai Laloa famous *Vaid* (doctor) from Dalla, who became Guru ji's devoted Sikh and spread Guru Nanak's gospel.

10) Bhai Mahesa was a rich and influential person from Sultanpur Lodhi. It is said that he begged Guru ji to initiate him as a Sikh. Guru ji told him to forsake his love for wealth and if he is poor people will laugh at him. Mahesa was firm in his decision and finally received the rites of initiation. It happened that, he incurred heavy losses and became a poor man and as predicted people did laugh at him. However, his faith for Sikhism remained solid as rock. Guru Amar Das ji

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was pleased at his steadfastness and bestowed him a Manji to preach in Sultanpur area.

11) Bhai Mai Das was a *vaisnavite sadhu* from Narli, near Amritsar. He embraced the Sikh faith at the hands of Guru Amar Das ji. Like Bhai Kheda (8) he too refused to eat from the community kitchen but later had a vision to go back to Goindwal and partake the langgar. At first he was attached to Manek Chand (12) as an apprentice. Later, he became the head of a Manji and spread the Sikh gospel in Tarn Taran and Amritsar area.

12) Bhai Manek Chand came from the village of Vairoval in Amritsar. As a Sikh of Guru Amar Das, he provided great service in the construction of the Baoli. In the course of digging, the Sikhs came across a hard rock, which when removed by Manak Chand, caused a great rush of the pent-up water which drowned him. Everyone thought that he was dead, but he survived. Guru ji called him *Jivara*, the living one. He was made head of a Manji.

13) Bibi Matho & Murari - Murari was from Khai village in Lahore. Murari's original name was Prema. He was a leper and had lost all his relations in childhood. Hearing of Guru Amar Das, he made his way to Goindwal. The Guru took him under his care and nursed him. He was completely cured of the disease. Guru ji persuaded one of his disciples, Bhai Sihan, to marry his daughter, Bibi Matho, to Murari. At first there was some objection from Sihan's wife, but when Guru ji told them that he was the god-father of Murari and that their daughter would come and stay in his house, they agreed. The couple was selected to teach Guru's gospel in Chunian and Kasur areas.

14) Bhai Paro was from the village of Dalla had received initiation from Guru Angad Devji. He was known for his piety and spiritual knowledge and was commonly called by the epithet Paramhans, i.e. swan perfect. It is said that some Muslims of high rank were inspired by him and embraced the Sikh faith. One of Bhai Paro's descendant, Narain Das, gave his daughter, Damodariji, in marriage to Guru Hargobind.

15) Bhai Phera, also known as Phiria was a native of Mirpur (Jammu). Before he became a devoted Sikh of Guru Amar Das, he was a disciple of a Yogi group. It is said that he had a melodious voice. Guru ji appointed him to a Manji to preach in Jammu and Kashmir. Many folks there took to the Sikh faith and a number of dharmsalas were established.

16) Bhai Raja Ram was a Brahmin. When he became a devoted Sikh of Guru ji, he was appointed to spread Guru Nanak's gospel in his native village of Sandhma in Jallundur district.

17) Bhai Rang Das came from a village of Gharuan in Ropar district. He was originally a Bairagi Sadhu, until he met Bhai Paro (14) and embraced Sikhism. He became a prominent Sikh of Guru Amar Das and was

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awarded a Manji to teach the Sikh faith in his area. It is said that his brother, Bhagat Nand Lal, also taught the Sikh faith at village Batta.

18) Bhai Rang Shah was from Jallunder. He became a staunch devotee of Guru Amar Das ji and was appointed to spread the Sikh faith in the Doaba region.

19) Sant Sadharan, a carpenter in Goindwal, was a devotee of Guru Amar Das ji. During the construction of the Baoli, he made a long wooden ladder for use by the workers, which greatly helped in the construction work. Guru ji was very pleased with him and called him "Sant" and bestowed a Manji. He shifted to Baba Bakala (Amritsar district), to spread the word of Guru Nanak.

20) Bhai Sawan Mall was the nephew of Guru Amar Das ji. He was pious and an accomplished Sikh in every respect. He was sent to the hilly country of Haripur to procure timber which was in demand for the construction of houses in Goindwal. He established cordial relations with the Raja of Haripur who was greatly impressed by his spiritual bearings. The Raja expressed his desire to meet Guru Amar Das. The Raja, his Queen and some courtiers accompanied Sawan Mall to Goindwal. They were all blessed by the Guru. Sawan Mall was told to return to the hilly region of Haripur to spread the Sikh faith there.

21) Sachchan Sachch was a Brahmin. He had the habit of responding to everyone by saying, "*sachch sachch* (true, true)". He was thus nick named Sachchan Sachch. He came to stay in Goindwal and became a great devotee of the Sikh faith. He used to collect firewood from the forest for the community kitchen. One day, he was attacked by an insane woman roaming naked in the forest. He related the incident to the Guru, who gave one of his slippers and told him to touch the woman when he meets her next. He did what he was told and she was instantly cured of her insanity. She told her story that she was previously the wife of a hill chief, but under a curse had gone crazy. Covering her naked body, Sachchan Sachch escorted her to the Guru's presence. The Guru married her to Sachchan Sachch and they were appointed to preach the Sikh faith in and around Ambala district.

22) Bhai Sukhan was from the village of Dhamial near Rawalpindi. He was a worshipper of Goddess Durga, until he met Guru Amar Das. He became a devoted Sikh and was made head of a Manji to preach the Guru's word in the Pathohar region.

PIRI SYSTEM

Although Guru Nanak Devji had called for equality between men and women, Guru Amar Das ji was aware that injustices against women by men and society were still going on. Women in their menses or after giving birth were considered ritually unclean. The *purdah* and *sati* practices still prevailed. Women were kept ignorant of the excellent role they could play at home and in society as advocated by the Sikh faith.

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Guru Amar Das ji, therefore, introduced the Piri System along with the Manji System. Women of divine spirit and well-versed in Sikh doctrines and traditions were chosen to guide the womenfolk and to light the flame of Guru's word and spread the fragrance of Naam. They were awarded the piri (a small wooden cot) from where the Piris would guide their audiences. Amongst the well-known Piris were Bibi Bhani, Bibi Dani and Bibi Pal.

ABOLISHING THE MASAND SYSTEM

The old order changeth yielding place to new. And God fulfills himself in many ways. Lest one good custom should corrupt the world. [Lord Alfred Tennyson]

How true are the above lines of the English poet, Tennyson! The introduction of the Masand System by Guru Amar Das was an excellent one. The Sikh faith was spread in many parts of India and in the neighbouring countries, and the donations of the devotees were brought back by honest Masands for use of community projects.

However, over a period of time corruption seeped in. Sikhs in general lost faith in the Masands, many of whom were known to misappropriate dasvand. Some of them used to extract *dasvand* by force. A number of Masands adopted an independent attitude and regarded their offices as hereditary. Many became fearless and even worked with the Guru's enemies. During the time of Guru Teg Bahadur, Amritsar was under the control of the masands. Guru Teg Bahadurji was refused a visit to Darbar Sahib. Ram Rai visited Guru Gobind Singh ji and told him about the misdeeds of the masands. Later, Ram Rai was burnt alive while in meditation by his masands.

Many Sikhs came and complained about the masands to Guru Gobind Singh ji. He called the masands and the lecherous and corrupted ones, were appropriately punished. He issued a **Hukamnama** in 1698, abolishing the Masand System and exhorted his Sikhs not to have any dealings with the masands and to offer their *dasvand* and offerings directly to the Guru. The Sikhs were joyful at the good riddance of the masands. And in this way, the old order was changed, yielding place to a new one. ❑

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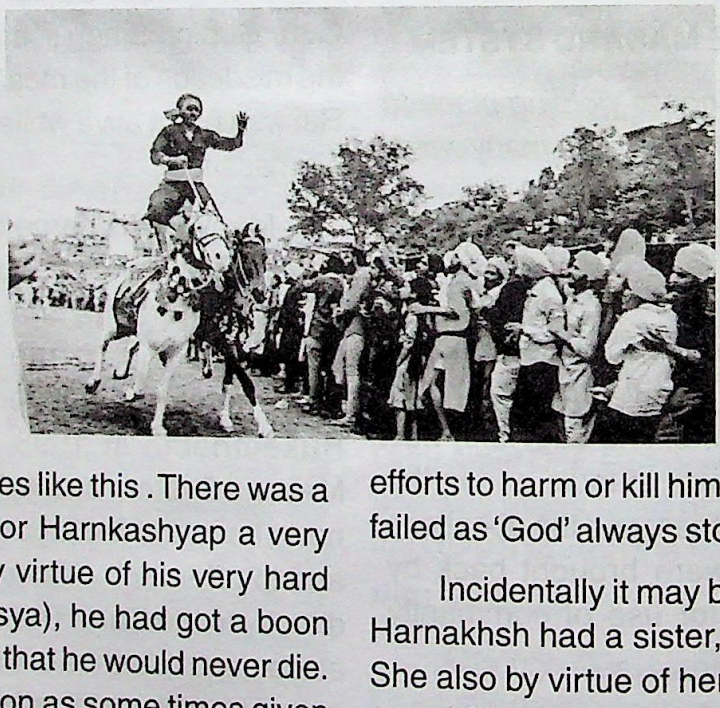
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Holi Now Khalsa's "Hola Mahalla!"

*JAGJIT SINGH**

Holi is observed or celebrated in India from times immemorial. Its base is in a legend of Hindu mythology. Its brief description is essential here as we are supposed to know something about its background. It is all the more required as its main legendry figures Harnakash and Prehalad are mentioned a number of times in Sri Guru Granth Sahib too.



The story goes like this . There was a King Harnakash or Harnkashyap a very long time ago. By virtue of his very hard Meditation (Tapasya), he had got a boon from the Almighty that he would never die. Detailed description as some times given is that he could not die or be killed either during day or night, either inside the house or outside or could not be killed either by a human being or a demon and so on. After getting this boon he became so egoistic or proud of himself that he stopped recognizing even God and told his people that he was the God, and people should worship him. Whosoever was defying him was to lose his life. It so happened by destiny that his own son, Prehlad by name raised a banner of revolt. He worshipped God and God only and all the efforts to persuade him to leave the path chosen by him failed. No threat could work on him. All the efforts to harm or kill him by his father also failed as 'God' always stood by his side.

Incidentally it may be mentioned that Harnakhsh had a sister, Holika by name. She also by virtue of her Bhagti, Tapsaya or worship of God Almighty, had a boon that she could not be burnt in any fire. Whenever she was caught or jumped into fire, she came out unscathed. Harnakash decided to use her as another tool. The plan was made out that she being the aunt of child Prehlad would take him in her lap and takes

*The article is an excerpts from the book: The Sikhishm - Culture, History & Religion.

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her position in a particular place. Then she would be put ablaze. Prehlad, the devout of God, shall be burnt alive and Holika would come out quite unhurt.

The plan was put to action. But the result was quite just the opposite. Holika was burnt but Prehlad came out quite safe. Some say that the boon was there, but it was to work and worked only when she was quite alone. If and when she was there with anyone else, the boon would not work. Some hold the opinion that there was a head-gear or a particular piece of cloth (Dupatta) that was to be worn by her invariably to save herself from the fire. She was wearing the cloth at the given time. But it so happened that with the will of God, the piece of cloth with the current of air just changed its position. It deprived the protection to Holika, but it came over the head of Prehlad, who was saved. When people came to know about the wicked trick, they came out openly in favour of Prehlad and took away the ashes of Holika and spread the same as dust in the area.

From that day onwards people are celebrating Holi in the said way in a joyous mood. It is often taken as a victory of good deeds over bad ones or those of Ram Bhagats – God - Fearing people over atheists or self-egoistic person. But the way it was or even now, is being celebrated at several places brought in some evil practices too. Throwing of mud and paint, soil or ash, water colours of different types upon one another, when being drunk to the full, generate different types of crimes in society. There is no observance of sense of sex discipline. There are abuses all around. Sometimes even brutal and murderous attacks are made to settle scores with any one on the pretext or under the fun and guise of Holi.

Guru Gobind Singh Sahib, the great visionary, when observed the ill practices all around and wastage of human energy in meaningless activities, thought of starting a new practice for canalizing this human energy in a constructive way.

It all happened after the Nirmoh Garh battle in 1701. Guru Sahib intended to crystallize the energy of Sikhs and was there to train them for the battlefield as the circumstances warranted. Regular training exercises were put in place. The Sikh warriors were being trained in swordsmanship, horse riding, shooting targets and other arts of the battle.

In the gatherings of the Khalsa at Anand Pur Sahib on Holi day, in 1701, he gave the Khalsa a new program. He put the Gursikhs in different groups according to their level of training, and started competitions amongst them. The people had the opportunity to show their prowess and the martial skills. As there were

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competitions, the Singhs could judge themselves, their positions viz a viz others and could gain a lot to improve their capabilities.

Any spirit generated by Guru Gobind Singh Sahib, is everlasting and is never going to die despite concerted and serious efforts by many to undo the acts done by him. Hola Mahalla, is being celebrated with full fervor and zeal by the Panth even today. Special games and competitions are being organized at many important historical Gurdwaras. A particular mention may be made of Anand Pur Sahib, Hazoor Sahib, Nanded, Patna Sahib, Mukatsar, a town of 40 Mukte, the forty liberated ones, Damdama Sahib Talwandi Sabo, Damdama Sahib, Delhi. Processions are carried out from one Gurdwara to another. Mock battles are held. Competitions are held. Nihangs perform different feats and show their varying skills. Gurbani Kirtans, Kavi darbars and Dhadi kirtans are also arranged on a vast scale.

At Anand Pur Sahib, an impressive and colourful procession is taken out in which the Nihangs in their traditional appearances take part on large scale. Then competitions are held in the open ground near Hol Garh Fort, across Charan Ganga a small river. People from throughout the country and even from abroad throng the town and enjoy the games particularly the feats of the Nihangs, the 'Ladli Fauj', the beloved army' of the guru.

At Hazoor Sahib, also it is celebrated with great zeal and the procession is led by a white horse believed to be a scion of the favourite blue-black stallion of Guru Dasmesh, also known with the title of 'Neele Wala', the rider of the blue horse. Thus we find how in a pragmatic way, the entire nature and 'roop' of a festival that had turned out to be quite ugly with the passage of time has been revitalized. The festival of colours, that was turning to be a festival of mud, paints, synthetic colours causing of different types of skin troubles, eye sight problems has been turned for providing an opportunity for creativity. It shows how a festival was originally a festival of love, a festival of 'Milans', a festival of remembering and recognizing the power of God, the Almighty, but was turning into a festival of spreading hatred. Opportunity of excessive alcoholism, sexual assaults, physical attacks, have again been restored its past glory and the dignity in a new garb, in a new name that is **HOLA MAHALLA**. Hola stands for masculine gender of Holi and Mahalla is a Persian word, signifying an organized march of the army.

It is worth mentioning that Hola Mahalla has been declared a holiday by the Punjab Government. □

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Where Religion & Law intersect: An American Scenario

*I. J. Singh**

Law represents the codification of societal behavior and community values, while religions speak to human aspirations and concepts of the ideal. This is so even though the ideal, by definition, is a goal and a direction, not something to be held in the palm of one's hand. Conflicts between what is and what should be become inevitable, and are often refered and adjudicated by the judicial system.

As of October 2005, in the state of Connecticut, 'same sex' couples are permitted civil unions with all of the rights that heterosexual married couples have. But that is a right that many religions, and many religious people refuse to recognize on grounds of morality.

Sikhism is silent on the issue, not because there are no homosexual couples but perhaps because in the sexually repressive Indian society homosexuals have always been closeted; they have never occupied public space. Traditional societies have tolerated homosexuals to a greater or lesser degree, usually the latter; their silence has often been interpreted as tacit disapproval. We know that in July 2005, when Canada legalized same sex unions, Canadian gurdwaras followed the lead of the Akkal Takht Jathedar and rejected the new law.

A friend, Amarjit Singh Buttar is a Justice of the Peace in Connecticut. He is an amritdhari Sikh. He was asked if he would perform same sex marriages. He thought about it and declined to do so. Why? His reasoning was that as a practicing Sikh he could not countenance such an act. He further believes that, even though the law grants this right to same sex couples, the vast majority of his community – almost entirely non-Sikh – would not be comfortable with it. The law, to him, does not truly represent community values. Also, the law grants him the privilege of performing same sex unions, but does not require him to do so.

Buttar is right on both counts. But the matter deserves some more thought.

I was there when battle lines were drawn over the Civil Rights Act of 1965.

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After a struggle, equal rights got enshrined into law. But what were community values like? Many people found that to accept the letter and spirit of the law turned their stomachs. Many lawyers, judges and civil servants found the new law repugnant and very much against their personally held beliefs. Yet, many of these people who ran the infrastructure of the country embraced the law fully. Perhaps they found the logic of the new law irresistible. Perhaps they were able to separate their personal beliefs from the requirements of the law that it be respected and obeyed by all citizens.

Think of the issue of birth control devices. Some states outlaw their sale. Why? Because majority values of the community prefer it thus. I would think that a licensed pharmacist would be legally bound to fill all prescriptions that met legal and professional criteria, but there are pharmacists who refuse to dispense certain prescriptions because the use of such drugs is contrary to their own personal religious beliefs.

One could argue that such reasoning results in a tyranny of the majority, resulting in civic breakdown. A democracy has to remain sensitive to the rights of the fewest, least and lowest of its citizens. It is one thing for a religion to withhold its imprimatur from certain behaviors. For example, to Roman Catholics, this means that denying sacraments like a church wedding or communion to a divorced person would be within the Church's power and domain. But for civil, secular law to curtail any of its citizens is quite another matter. Such rights are sacrosanct unless an individual has been convicted of a serious crime and certain privileges of citizenship, like the right to vote, taken away by law.

I also remember when barbers, physicians and dentists in the United States would refuse to serve black clients with the excuse that they did not know how to treat hair, diseases or teeth of blacks. No licensing board would now entertain the idea as anything else than what it really was--- unadulterated racism. No one compels us to break bread or share social time with any person or a people that one does not like, no matter what the reason. But there is no law that's going to look away when such choices are allowed any play in the public arena. All people homosexual or not, black, white or some other god-forsaken color, men, women or even those unsure of their identity pay the same taxes. From these taxes, civil servants, bureaucrats and politicians are appointed or elected to serve the whole citizenry, not just a part of it. All citizens deserve the same equal service, with the same courtesy and efficiency.

If Guru Granth does not dwell at all on such matters as I broach today, it is because Sikhism takes a larger, universal and inclusive position. The teachings are

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forthright: justice, equal rights, compassion and succor for the needy. The basics of Sikhism can be summarized in three fundamentals ---an honest living, sharing the rewards of life with others, and a life attuned to the Infinite within each of us, and common to us all. Nowhere does it ask that the recipient of our mercy has to be a Sikh, and cannot be a Hindu, Muslim, and Christian, Jew, or even an agnostic or an atheist. Nowhere does Sikh teaching or tradition ask us to deride, belittle or refuse to help a neighbor if he or she is of a particular sexual orientation.

Not that I have any sure-fire answers to these matters, but I raise these matters to see if we can all think through this rationally, while keeping in mind our age-old Sikh traditions, which have historically treasured and nurtured human rights as none other.

It seems to me that an institutional religion may withhold certain sacraments from a follower who is not in good grace because of certain acts against its doctrine or tradition. However, the followers of that religion may not use this to deny or curtail any non-religious civic role to him or her.

Demeaning others because they are different from us will make their life difficult, but it will diminish us even more. □

The Seeker's Path: An Interpretation of Guru Nanak's Japji, by Sohan Singh

Sacred Writings of the Sikhs (UNESCO)

The above landmark publications brought out by Orient Longman at the initiative of the Sikh Cultural Centre, Kolkata, a**re available at a special discounted price (incl. postal & handling charges) to the readers of *The Sikh Review* in India/abroad.**

	India	Abroad
The Seeker's Path	Rs. 200/-	US$ 7.00
Sacred Writings of the Sikhs	Rs. 500/-	US$ 13.00

We invite all readers to avail of the opportunity to acquire these handy volumes in English language for the benefit of the new generation.

- Publisher, ***The Sikh Review***

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The Psychology of Some "Dera Sant" of India - The Cult Leaders

*Dr. S. S. Sodhi**

In this article, I would share with your readers the following aspects of cult leaders **"THE DERA SANT"** of India and their implication to Post-Modern PANJAB-HARYANA Socio-Political Climate.

1. What is a cult?
2. When do cults become religion?
3. Why do people join cults?
4. How are cult leaders produced and their pathological personality functioning?
5. What are the conditions in society that produce cult and cultish behavior?
6. Why Indian environment (social/political/spiritual) reinforces cultish behaviours?
7. Uses and abuses of cults?

The English term CULT originated in the early 17th century, borrowed via the French "CULTE" Latin CULTIS (Worship). In the 19th century the term was used for "excessive devotion through faith healing". The cult followers fit into New Religious Movements (NRM) which have acquired a peripheral place within the societies dominant religions, RADHA SWAMI movement of Panjab and its relationship to Sikhism is a case in point (see Radhasoami Reality by M.J.)

Max Weber, a famous sociologist of USA along with Dr. Becker, Dr. Troeltsch, Dr. Lofland, Dr. Wallis, Bruce Campbell, Dick Anthony (Psychologist) have intensely studied the cultish behaviours.

In 1983, many distinguished scholars (Harvey Cox, Larry Shinn, T. Hopkins, A.L. Basham (Wonder India), Shrivatsa Goswami, Steven Gelberg and Robert Ellwood in USA, studied Hare Krishna movement to throw some light on cultural behaviour of its followers.

In 1988, Park Street Press USA published a very famous book entitled "Combatting Cult Mind Control" by Steven Hassan America Leading Exit Counsellor.

In 1991, Princeton University Press, by Mark Juergensmeyer, Professor of Sociology, University of California, Santa Barbara. In this book, Dr. Juergensmeyer covered such topics as:

1. Beas Colony
2. Dayal Bagh Colony

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3. Gurmat Sidhant
4. Gurus of RADHA SOAMIS
5. Initiation ceremonies
6. Out of Body Experiences
7. SAT SANG and its usefulness.

And finally, Khushwant Singh, a famous Indian Sikh author published a book entitled 'Gods and Godmen of India", India today Publications (2003). In this book by Mr. Khushwant Singh talked about Dhirendra Brahmachri (cult Guru of Indira Gandhi), Shardha Mata, Krishnamurti, Rajneesh, Lama who loved women, How Hindus are Sikhs? God is a good business, Shraddha Mata, Man of Miracles Sathya Sai, Baba Harbhajan Singh Yogi of Kudleni yoga, USA.

American Psychological Association (1987) studied the coercive persuasion techniques of control cults use to recruit new followers. They concluded that these cults use deceptive methods to make followers compromise their individual freedom which causes serious harm to thousands of individuals and families.

Psychologist Michael Langone of International Cultic Studies Association defines a destructive cult as "a highly manipulative group which exploits and sometimes physically and psychologically damages members and its recruits". Money making (see Yogi Bhajan's Akal Security and Tea Empire) is the covert motive of the self-appointed instant Saints - Gurus. Once the recruit joins the cult, he develops "Sociopathic Syndrome" (HARE.UBC), undergoes behaviour and personality changes, suffers loss of personal identity, estrangement from the family, and ENSLAVEMENT BY CULT LEADERS. The most common exploitation the charismatic cult leaders do is to severely abuse innocent girls for their libidinal pleasures (RAM RAHIM SINGH - is a case in point).

To sum up, it can be stated that cult is a closed religious group based on veneration, rituals, devotion to a person (Oshoo, Sai Baba, Ram Rahim Singh). These cultish persons are not part of any accepted religion, though they borrow heavily from the holy books (Bible, Gita, Guru Granth Sahib, Kabir Granthawali).

Motivation to Join Cults

Cult provides its members friendship, connections, identity and loyalty. It enhances their self esteem (Majabi Sikhs driven away from dominant Sikh castes,became PREMIS OF RAM RAHIM SINGH (INSAN). Interpersonal relationship and social acceptances were the motivators for the PREMIS.

The cults allow its followers to fulfill Dr. Maslows higher needs of safety and possible spiritual self actualization.

According to Dr. Maslow (Maslow-Towards a psychology of Being 1968), these cult followers want to become honest, pure, clean, benevolent, wholesome, alive, self-

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regulated, fully functional, simple, playfully self-sufficient, autonomous self-determining, and esteemed individuals. They are painfully aware of their need deficits personality and socially created (untouchable) existence. They want to create their image as the reflection of the "SAINT" whom they consider as Cosmically Reached. According to Maslow, the cult leader promises to his followers that he will remove their "Deficits Needs" such as security employment, resources, health, property, friendship, self esteem, confidence, achievement and affection. He will also show them the techniques (chanting, meditation, Kundalinee Yoga) to help them reach high level of morality, creativity, spontaneity, and altered states of consciousness by awakening "their intelligence".

Dr. Steven Hassan thinks that insecurity, alienation (MAZBI SIKHS, Untouchables), "need to belong" to get recognition (Premis of Ram Rahim Singh), weakness of personal character, limited cognitive ability, need to rebel, need to edify, need to be different (HARE KRISHNA in USA) need to self sacrifice (seeking Maffy through RAPE), lack of self knowledge as a result of poor socialization, motivates the followers to join the cult.

Personality of a Cult Leader that Attracts Followers

According to DSM4 Psychiatrists Bible of U.S.A they may have the following personality disorders:

1. Histronic Personality Disorder
2. Antisocial Personality Disorder
3. Narcissistic Personality Disorder

Due to these disorders the psychiatrists think that they develop "MALIGNANT SELF LOVE". They start feeling grandiosed self importance. They indulge in Magical Thinking, produce Magical Shows/Movies (Ram Rahim Singh). They are obsessed with fantasies of unlimited success (Great Asharm 700 acres) Beas Dehra miles and miles, and Property in Chandigarh. These cult leaders start requiring or asking for excessive admiration, adultation, and affirmation (Narcissitic supply). They become interpersonal, exploitative (especially to young women), and devoid of empathy.

These cult leaders suffer from repressed aggression, paranoia, scared and erratic libidinal urges.

Dr. Robert D. Hare, Professor Emeritus, University of British Columbia, Canada, thinks that cult leaders exhibit symptoms of psychopathy which include Superficial charm, grandiosity, constant need for seeking stimulation and excitement, pathological lying, cunning and manipulation, lack of remorse, poor impulse control, irresponsibility, denial, parasitic life style, sexual addiction and promiscuity, failure to accept responsibility for own action and criminal versatility.

I would like to end this article with a recent quote of Ruben Banerjee, a famous

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reporter of Hindustan Times (Aug 29/17). He reports that god man and god woman of India give poor people a false sense of security and a false sense of identity and bonding burnished by the charities, along with medicare, education and paying for the marriages of poor girls. Mr. Banerjee thinks "there is no broom readily available in India to sweep them away and the cocktail of poverty, ignorance, superstition, insecurities and caste hierarchies will unmistakably continue to breed more cult leaders in the times to come. It is a business of demand and supply. There will be more cult leaders like Ram Rahim Singh getting ready to shame us as there is no shortage of GULLLIBLE INDIANS supported by Indian Politicians and its cultures". ☐

A Tribute to (Late) Sr. Mohan Singh Padam

*HARMINDER SINGH PADAM**



Sardar Mohan Singh Padam, our beloved father - a longtime member subscriber, contributor and also a representative of "The Sikh Review" in Kenya, had passed away, last year - after a brief illness, on 27th July 2017.

Born in Nairobi on 28th April 1933, but he completed his higher studies in Amritsar, Punjab and then returned back to his country of birth - Kenya - in 1955.

He was a man of great dedication and determination and had always looked for the opportunities to serve the community affairs. He worked in Mombasa, Kisumu and Kisii. It was in Kisii that he started his Insurance business from scratch and took it to great heights.

He was married to Davinder Kaur, and were blessed with two sons and one daughter. Sardar Padam has left behind a flourhing extended family with grand as well as greatgrand childrens.

He was a very respecful and popular figure among locals and touched the lives of many through the various community services. He was actively involved with the Masonic Lodge, Lions Club and also the Gurdwara Sahib committee. So much was his reputation in Kenya for his community services that he was conferred with the prestigious HSC award from President of Kenya, Mwai Kibaki in 2013.

As an individual, he had a charming personality with a very sound memory. He was known as the Flying Sikh in the Lions Club fraternity, as he always attended meetings and conventions, far and wide.

With the passing away of Sardar Mohan Singh Padam "The Sikh Review" has lost its Ambassador to Kenya.

We pray to Almighty Akal Purakh to bless the departed soul an eternal rest on His feet.

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THE SIKH FORUM, KOLKATA

THE SIKH WELFARE ASSOCIATION, KOLKATA

Registration No - S/2L/23705 of 2014-15

The Sikh Forum Kolkata, has long been dedicated to the noble cause of rekindle the spirit of SIKHISM amongst Sikh students and to help them to lead a Gurmat inspired Sikh way of life as enshrined in Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji by organizing the following activities through out the year.



Sunday Classes



Bhai Mardana Inter School Gurbani Gayen Competition



Sohni Dastaar Muqabla



INSPIRATION
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Gurmat Sikhya Camp

Encouraged by the tremendous response and the overwhelming spirit and momentum, the above activities have inspired us to carry forward the same. Therefore we request you to kindly extend your full co-operation to this Panthic cause and help us to train our Boys & Girls to emerge as true citizens of the Universe and to be able to serve the society.

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email - thesikhforumkolkata@gmail.com /SikhForum
Contact no. - 9339068311, 9831046833, 9433085279, 9831996001, 9831021673

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Compassionate Ludhiana – Home for Homeless

*MINNA ZUTSHI**

When all doors are shut, there is one that remains open — ready to provide shelter, succor and comfort to the destitute. This is how Dr Naurang Singh Mangat, former professor and scientist, describes the Guru Amar Das Apahaj Ashram. A home for the homeless, the ashram is located near Sarabha village in Ludhiana district in Punjab. It houses 62 inmates, who are provided food, clothing, medicine and shelter for free.

Cut back to the year 2005. A man in his mid-50s cycles across the city daily. He stops by wherever he sees any sick person lying on the roadside. If the illness is severe, he arranges for the sick to be admitted to hospital. In case of less serious sickness, he takes the patient to a doctor for consultation and even provides medicines.

The man seems indefatigable. His untiring energy and determination are hard to miss. Not many are willing to believe that this unassuming man is a former professor from Punjab Agricultural University (PAU) and scientist from Morrison Scientific Inc., Calgary, Canada.

For four years, Dr Mangat, the man with the mission of helping the sick and the disabled, continued this service single handedly. During these years, the humble bicycle remained his mode of transportation. He would spend money from his own pocket to meet the medical expenses of the poor and the abandoned.

The man who had immigrated to Canada, along with his family in 1996, was now back to live in Ludhiana. The decision was propelled by his desire to help the sick and the disabled lead a life of dignity. In 2009, he started the apahaj ashram – a shelter for the homeless and disabled. For most part of the year, Dr Mangat stays at the ashram which is now run by a trust. He goes to Canada for four-five months to be with his wife and children who are settled there.

"At the ashram, my day begins at 3 am. From 4.30 am to 6 am, it is prayer time. Around 8.30 am, the ashram work starts," says Dr Mangat.

The ashram has inmates hailing from Punjab, UP, Bihar, West Bengal, Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Nepal, Rajasthan. When they were shifted to the ashram, some of

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them were in a pitiable state: they had not taken a bath for months together. A few were paralyzed, while others were mentally ill.

The ashram houses 21 mentally ill patients. As many as 15 of them suffer from paralysis. The sevadars help the patients in their routine activities. Langar, prepared by the sevadars, is served to the ashram inmates. "Ours is a self-dependent initiative, though good Samaritans keep donating wheat grains, medicines. We prepare wheat flour in the ashram itself. Vegetables, too, are grown in the ashram. A doctor visits the ashram regularly. A psychiatrist from Ludhiana offers free services every month."

No one who is homeless has ever been refused admission, says Dr Mangat. "We do not have any space constraint. We have enough space for the poor and homeless who have no family or resources to fall back upon. This home always welcomes them with open arms." □

A Request from the Editor / Publisher

The Sikh Review has been sustained – for over half-a-century by the writings of hundreds of meritorious authors and contributors – who write for the love of God – without expecting any remuneration. Indeed we are in no position to remunerate / compensate the authors / writers who have cheerfully and selflessly sustained this journal over 60 plus years!

Post-script:

It happens that we are "chock-a-block" with hundreds of pending writings. This note is meant to convey our sincere apology to all our scholar – contributors / writers; also to assure them of our appreciation. Even so, not every article can be accommodated and processing call for "Dicking and Choosing"! Kindly bear with this – your – journal and its volunteer-staff.

Publisher – The Sikh Review

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Let us Celebrate MAA-BOLI – (ਪੰਜਾਬੀ) Punjabi!

*Mrs. O. Tara Singh**

I was pleasantly surprised to read about International '**Maa Boli Divas**' in the June issue of The Sikh Review (page 54) and found it very interesting indeed. Language, any language, is an issue that often lends itself to much volatile controversy, and may be debated endlessly as there are innumerable arguments, both for and against, that one might care to put forth. Then again language, any language, is an invaluable asset too; an excellent tool of communication.

Of particular interest to me was the passage on Malaysia and its experiment with weekend language classes. This is an initiative by the community to revive a declining interest in the learning of the Punjabi language. Yes, it is sad but very true that some parents themselves are not conversant in their mother tongue. An oft repeated refrain from years ago (I have lived here for five decades now, and I suppose that entitles me to make this observation) still rings in my ears: *Punjabi sikh ke ki karniey. Is naal koi kamaai te nahin kar-sakidi.* Malaysia witnessed the rampant closure of Punjabi classes in gurdwaras owing to poor attendance and dwindling enrolment. This led to a generation of youngsters many of whom grew up not knowing the language. But today, particularly, these very children who have grown up to become parents themselves, and the community in general, realize what they have missed by ignoring their 'maaboli' and want most fervently to get their offspring to learn the language.

Here again it must be kept in mind that a weekend class alone cannot work a miracle. The active involvement of parents and family members is of utmost importance if progress is to be made. A parent is the child's first tutor. We must never forget that a child's mind is like a sponge. It will readily absorb whatever language is taught at an early age. For a start we need to take the initiative and introduce our children to the beauty of the language. The poetry in the Sri Guru Granth Sahib is soul stirring. It takes time and patience, but it is our responsibility to instil

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a lasting love for the language in our children. For a start we should resolve to converse more in Punjabi at home. To maximize the childrens' exposure to the language it might help to play some Gurbani kirtan/Punjabi music at home or in the car on a regular basis.

How about our literary celebrities, our poets and writers, our scholars and novelists, like Bhai Vir Singh and Amrita Pritam to name but a few. Once the children are acquainted with the treasures that abound in our own language they will want to learn it too. Amrita Pritam's Ode to Waris Shah is a good example. Apart from the eloquent poetry, it is the cry of an anguished soul as well as a lesson in the history of those painful, traumatic times. We should never abandon our 'maaboli'. Instead we should be proud of it as it is the language that connects us to our roots. Should we leave the Punjabi language out of our lives, we shall find ourselves spiritually poorer and disconnected from our holy scriptures. It is true we have brilliantly written translations available today, but the following expression by Nelson Mandela comes to mind again and again:

"If you talk to a man in the language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart."

This says it all, and beautifully too. I very strongly feel that it enriches our lives immensely to know our '**Maa Boli**'. Further, the language is of enormous significance to the Sikh community in particular, because the Sri Guru Granth Sahib is written in our 'maaboli'.

It goes without saying that there is a lot to be said in favour of the English language as well. For us Indians, as with several other commonwealth countries, it is a foreign language. We inherited this legacy left behind by the British in the form of an elaborate education system conducive to its learning. Here in Malaysia the national education policymakers of the day silenced all voices of reason and persisted in their folly, when in a frenzied eagerness to promote Bahasa Malaysia (the national language) they implemented drastic policy changes in the 1970's. This led to a sharp decline in the standard of English nationwide. As a result, even today the powers that be are struggling to undo the damage caused over the years.

Moreover, is it not beneficial to encourage the young ones to learn more than one language? It cannot be denied that English is a powerful tool of communication and should rightly occupy a very special place among the skills we possess. It is

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most widely used and dominates almost all spheres of human activity. It can safely claim to be a universal language. Even though it is a foreign language, we have chosen to adopt it, embrace it and excel in it for very many reasons. That is great and goes to our credit. Proficiency in the English language most certainly bodes well for the future of our children. But nobody says that we have to be monolingual! Should we not consider being bilingual or even multilingual? Can we not subscribe to a three language formula? Mastery of English is a must if one hopes to do well in life. Then it is also necessary to learn the national language of whichever country one is residing in. We in the diaspora need to learn our respective national language just like Indians in India are required to learn the Hindi. A regional language (Punjabi in our case, which is our 'Maa Boli') completes the equation.

It will not be irrelevant to mention here that in our region some parents make a special effort to teach their children Mandarin as well, keeping in mind the progressing economic dominance of China in many spheres. Often times, Chinese businesses advertise job openings in their establishments and specifically seek candidates who possess a working knowledge of Mandarin!

Learning of the **'Maa Boli'** connects us to our precious scriptures, our heritage and our culture. Should we ignore it?

❑

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Bidar to Hasan Abdal

*Bhupinder Singh, Houston (TX, USA)**

Between 1500 and 1524, Guru Nanak travelled more than 28,000 km in four major preaching tours of the world. During these *Udasis* (religious tours), he visited numerous holy places of different faith, met people of various faiths who professed his newfound path. He challenged orthodox rituals and impressed all, with his wisdom and saintly demeanor. Let us visit two historical landmarks – one in the south and other in the north. One in the south of India, where he shifted a rock with his foot; to start a stream of fresh water that provided succor to the people suffering water shortage. The other in the north of India then (now Pakistan), where he firmly embedded back the boulder rolling down the hillock with his hand leaving a handprint. Both events associated with rocks and water flowing to quench the thirst. The one in the south uplifted the poor with a source of fresh water, while the other in the north humbled the haughty.

During his second *Udasee* he covered the south of India. After passing through Khandwa, Nanded, and Nasik Guru Ji moved further along with Mardana. Guru Ji reached outskirts of Bidar in year 1512 and decided to camp there to meet Pirs Jalaluddin and Yakoob Ali. They had built a fort around the source of water and controlled the supply. Nearby were the huts of Muslim fakirs, who took keen interest in the sermons and teachings of the great Guru. The news soon spread throughout Bidar and its surrounding areas about the holy saint of the north and large number of people started coming to visit him and seek his blessings. There used to be acute shortage of drinking water in Bidar. Guru Nanak was told that Bidar had brackish water and people had to dig deep or go far to fetch potable water. Even in those wells that produced water, it was found to be unfit for drinking. Guru Ji was greatly moved by the plight of the poor, while uttering **Sat Kartar**, shifted a stone

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with his wooden sandals and removed some rubble from the place. To the utter surprise of all, a spring of cool and fresh water started flowing. That is how the place soon came to be known as Nanak Jhira (**Jhira=Stream**). Today a magnificent Gurudwara, along with a high school, and an engineering college commemorate the visit. The crystal clear stream that still flows out of a rock near the Gurudwara, it is believed to be God's answer to the Guru's prayers.

Guru Nanak Dev Ji along with Bhai Mardana Ji reached Hasan Abdal in Attock District now in Pakistan in April of 1521. Under a shady cool tree, Guru Nanak and Bhai Mardana started reciting Kirtan and soon some devotees gathered around. This annoyed a local saint, Hazrat Shah Wali Qandhari, who meditated atop a nearby hill but he was helpless.

According to legend, Bhai Mardana was very thirsty and asked Guru Ji permission to go up the hill and drink water from the spring. Bhai Mardana asked Wali Kandhari for water which he refused. Then he came back and Guru Ji asked him to go back again and request him humbly. Guru Ji sent him back third time to Shah Wali Qandhari instructing Mardana, to tell him that the men of God should not be selfish, but always share with others. Wali Qandhari not only refused his request but was rude to him. In spite of all this, Mardana still very politely stuck to his demand. The Wali ironically remarked: *"Why don't you ask your Master whom you serve?"*

Mardana went back to the Guru in a miserable state and said *"Oh lord! I prefer death to thirst but will not approach Wali the egoist."* The Guru replied *"Oh Bhai Mardana! Repeat the Name of God, the Almighty; and drink the water to your heart's content."*

The Guru put aside a big rock lying nearby and a pure fountain of water sprang up and began to flow endlessly. Bhai Mardana quenched his thirst and felt grateful to the Guru.

On the other hand, the spring of Shah Wali Qandhari soon dried up. On witnessing this, the Wali in his rage threw a boulder towards the Guru from the top of the hill. The Guru stopped the rolling rock with his hand leaving his handprint on the rock.

Bhai Mardana asked Guru Ji "if this was quite a challenging test for me going up to Wali three times." Guru Ji replied, "This was Pir's test. The anger and pride in saints

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is despicable." Wali Kandahri was still in shock witnessing the draining of his spring. When he saw that he could not inflict bodily damage on Guru Ji, he came down and sought forgiveness from Guru Ji. Guru Ji advised him, "One should not be proud of God's gift. He can take them away at his will as he has taken away the spring of water from you."

This holy and revered place was named Panja Sahib by Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa, the most famous General of the Kingdom of the Sikhs. He is credited with having built the first gurdwara at this place. Several attempts to deface the impression of the hand of Guru Ji on the rock have failed.

What I find a common and fascinating trait between the two events is that water became a tool for controlling and exploitation against the have-nots. Now, water which is considered as a symbol of humility because of its nature to flow downwards and to assume the shape of vessel it is poured into; became a ready exploitation tool in the hands of respectable clergy. But Guru Ji employed rock, considered a symbol of pride and arrogance to rectify the situation of exploitation. Guru Ji's message? That exploitation was not appropriate for the religious leaders, but the service of mankind was. Guru Ji uses rock to melt rock like hearts and turn them into service of mankind.

We just celebrated 500 years anniversary of Guru Nanak's visit to Bidar in 2012, and the same centenary anniversary of the visit to Hasan Abdal is approaching in 2021. Let us start planning for a celebration for it on the grand and befitting scale. □

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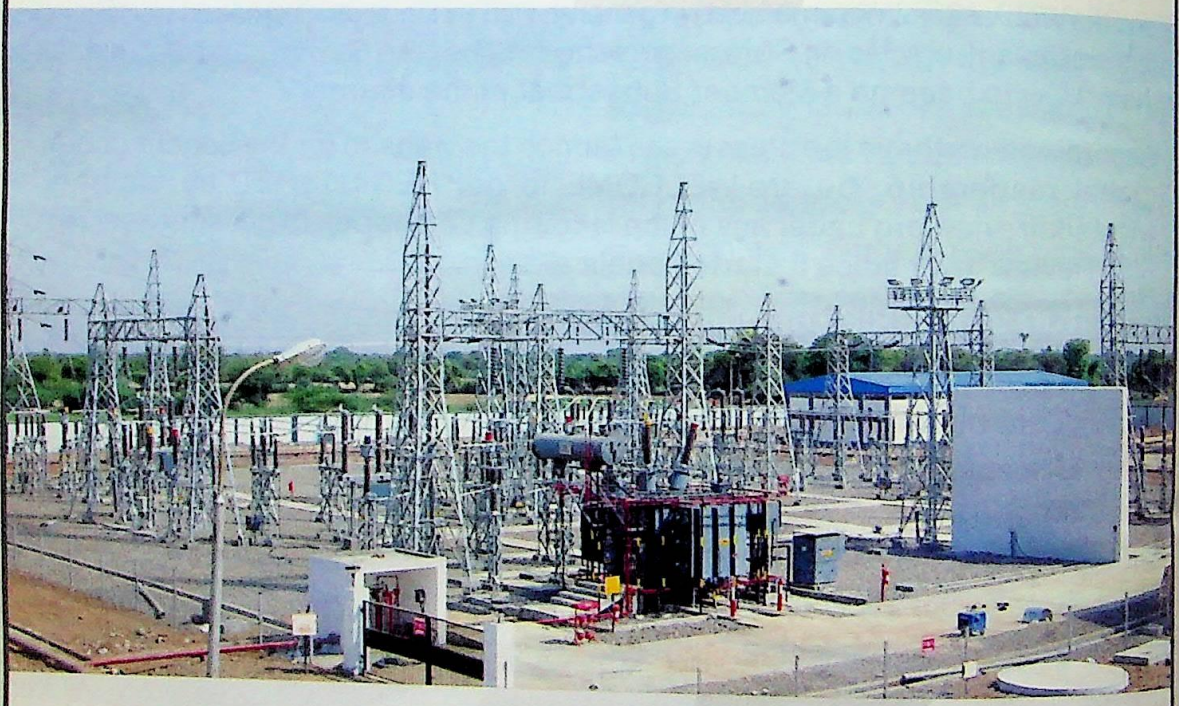
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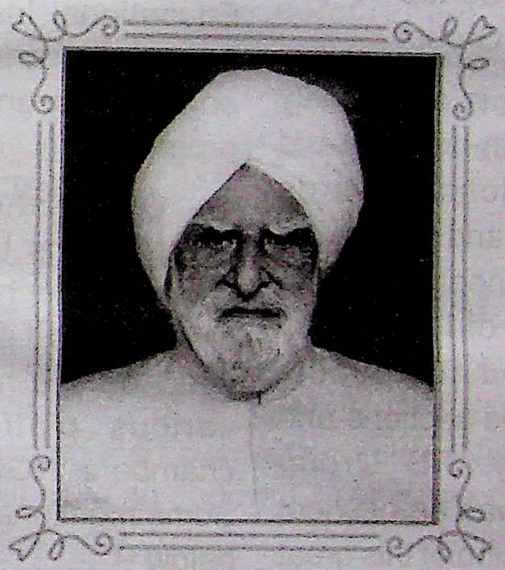
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A Homage to Sardar Jodh Singh

*CONTRIBUTED**

"Vision looks inward and becomes duty. Vision looks outward and becomes aspiration. Vision looks upward and becomes faith." – *Stephen Samuel Wise*

Sardar Jodh Singh, the founder of JIS Group and the Chairman of JIS Group Educational Initiatives, Lovingly known as Babuji, by all the members of the Group as well as people of diverse views, had passed away on 25th January 2018. He was widely acclaimed for his progressive insight in the domain of business development.



Born to a Sikh family in 1920 in a remote village of Montgomery district; erstwhile Punjab Province in Pakistan, he settled in India along with his brother and their wives during the time of Indo-Pak partition in 1947. After immigrating to India and 'testing the waters' for business opportunities for a short while, in Ludhiana, Sardar Jodh Singh came to realize that there was an enormous potential for dairy business in Kolkata; erstwhile Calcutta. This inspired him to come to Kolkata in the year 1952 and commence the dairy project with eight buffaloes. His business instinct and his hard work turned the table around and he became the owner of JSIS - one of the largest dairy business farms with 3,500 buffaloes and cattle - that used to supply milk to the leading Milk Dairy Products Suppliers in Kolkata like Belgachia Central Dairy, Howrah Dairy and confectioners like Haldiram Foods and Bhikaram Chandmal.

His success in dairy business fueled his passion to grow and his next successful business venture i.e.

*JIS Group of Institutions

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Northern Cargo Services - associated with some of the flagship companies in India like IOCL, HPCL and BPCL - came into existence. Subsequently, a series of flourishing enterprises such as JSIS Iron & Steel (India) Pvt Ltd. Guru Nanak Overseas Company Pvt Ltd. Narula Infrastructure Pvt. Ltd., MESA-NARULA (JV), HASH Technologies Pvt Ltd (JV), SATNAM Infrastructure Pvt Ltd. (JV) have also been added to the glorious heritage of JIS Group.

Sardar Jodh Singh is also widely acknowledged for his path-breaking and exemplary contributions towards building of modern India and serving the society through his pioneering role in alleviating the scourge of illiteracy by propagating the need for quality education across various sections and strata of the society. JIS Group Educational Initiatives was an offshoot of such an ascending vision of this great soul.

JIS Group Educational Initiatives had a very humble beginning. It was founded in the year 1998 with the commencement of a Joint Venture - Asansol Engineering College - with a single vision - Igniting Minds, Empowering Lives. Now, his 19 years of consistent battle accompanied by hard work, commitment, unflinching aspiration and unshakable faith has been profusely blessed by the Almighty at a length. It was a glorious moment for him and his team to see thousands of students pursuing higher education in JIS Group of Colleges and equipping themselves to become industry ready professionals for successful careers. Today JIS Group Educational Initiatives is the largest premier education service provider in Eastern India, having 26 Educational Institutes with over 126 programs and 35000+ students enrolled into these diverse academic programs.

Over the years, Babuji's contributions towards the education service sector have received a plethora of accolades. Like the bygone years, this year too, he has been felicitated in various platforms by prominent chambers, NGOs and media houses. Some mentionable ones are appended below –

- Rotary District 3291 had felicitated him for his 'Outstanding performance in Self-Financing Higher Education Sector in its District Conference "Samaroh".
- Public relations Society of India (PRSI), during its program 'Young India and Communication Revolution', felicitated Sardar Jodh Singh for his Visionary and

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Dynamic Leadership for path breaking contribution towards furthering Education.

- Kara khabar - a known vernacular media house felicitated Sardar Jodh Singh for his contribution to enhance and expand the scope of Higher Education In West Bengal, secular ideas and extraordinary vision.
- Parivar premier league - a unit of Bijan Banerjee Memorial Charitable Trust had acknowledged his contributions by naming a cricket match trophy in his name ' Sardar Jodh Singh Trophy'

Being an unstoppable persona who never thought of looking back, Babuji, taking his vision to the next level, through the Group, intended to unite all dimensions of Education from undergraduate to post graduate Programs in Engineering and Technology, Computer Applications, Dental Science, Pharmacy, Hospitality, diverse streams of Management, etc. under the same umbrella in order to comprehensively and collectively optimize the reach of Educational Initiatives in every sections and corners of the society thereby leading towards a better future. ❑

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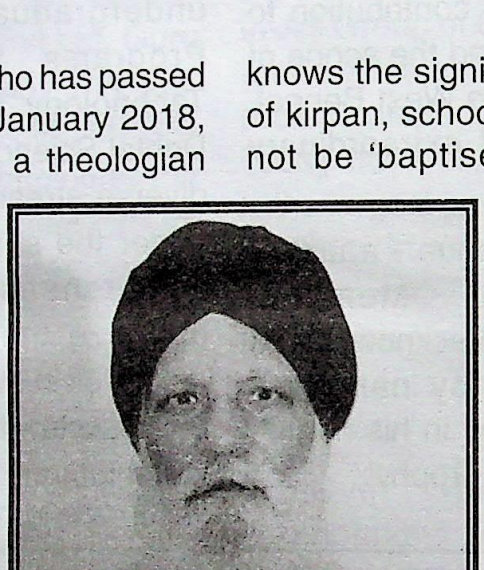
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S. Gurmit Singh (1935 - 26 Jan. 2018): An Obituary

[A crusader and campaigner for the Sikh faith]

*(Bawa) Jagdev Singh, OAM**

Sr. Gurmit Singh Ji, who has passed away [to *Gurpuri*] on 25 January 2018, was widely regarded as a theologian and author, who upheld the ethics of the faith he inherited, preached and practiced its ethos. He will be missed by, a huge circle of friends who knew him world over. In particular he will be mourned by those who sought some advice on the Sikh Rahet Maryada and the Gurbani text - as I, the secretary of the National Sikh Council, often did, when faced with the view on certain social, cultural and religious issues. I vividly recall when the Council had to make a ruling whether a school-going child should be "baptised" with Khande di Pahul - and carry a kirpan to the school, I sought S. Gurmit Singh's advice and his firm answer was "only a mature person should become Amrit – Dhari - who can recite Gurbani and knows the significance - and purpose - of kirpan, school going children should not be 'baptised'! he would argue. However he was uncompromising, according to his own belief.



When the Chaplain of the Royal Military College wrote to the Sikh Council Of Australia to seek advice whether a Sikh Army personnel was forbidden to remove his turban and wear a helmet, for his own protection, in a situation where he is to deal with fire, explosive or poisonous gas. Council sent an email to all its members and overseas Sikh scholars, retired Army and Air force personnel and most of them agreed that when a serviceman has to deal with fire, explosive or poisonous gas he can wear helmet over his Patka and even the Air Force pilots

**Secretary - The National Sikh Council of Australia Inc. [Email: bawaj@optusnet.com.au]*

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have to remove their turban to put on the flying suit with all the communication gears in the helmet, but so strong was his faith in Sikhi or Sikh Rehat Maryada that he was the only person who was against removing the turban.. But he had no soft corner for the, Sant Babas, Dehara Walas, SGPC , Akali Dal and the Sikh politicians as they were responsible for the disunity amongst the Sikhs and the decimation of Sikh Nation.

He firmly believed in people taking responsibility for their own actions and shaping their own destinies and was a strenuous advocate of reform, especially in the teaching of Sikh philosophy. He always attacked the literary, philosophical, and pseudo-priestly establishments of his days for amassing unnecessary wealth by misrepresenting and misinterpreting and selling Gurbani which was given free to the Sikhs by Guru Nanak.

"Thrig tenhan ka Jeevana Jo lekh lekh bache Naam"

An ardent advocate of speaking Punjabi at home with growing children and strongly supported the claim of Punjabi Language as a subject in the school curriculum and ultimately a subject of the HSC curriculum. He took upon himself the task of teaching Punjabi and Sikh Religious Education (SRE) voluntarily in NSW schools as long as he lived.

He established The Sikh Khalsa Mission Association, printed books, pamphlets and articles on Gurubani and distributed free of charge to the people in Gurudwaras and emailed to all on his posting list.

Being a Justice of the Peace of NSW he provided this free service to the Sikh community and other Australians.

He was a dedicated Sikh for the Sikh cause,

Sikh Council of Australia appointed him as the Sikh Chaplin and he visited Sikh inmates in the Corrective Services in NSW.

As a volunteer he taught SRE (Sikh Religious Education) classes in schools in Sydney for a number of years.

He had a thorough understanding and knowledge of Gurbani and Sikh history and was a crusader of the Sikh philosophy and Panthic unity which he actively promoted and often expressed his disgust about the gullible being misguided by the so called self-styled leaders on the Sikh nation

He always expressed his opinion to his State and Federal parliamentarian on issue affecting not only the Sikhs but the other communities.

We pray to Satguru to grant peace and tranquillity to the departed soul, and offer our sincerely heartfelt sympathy and condolences to his bereaved family. ☐

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At the Guru's Gate

*CHRIS MOONEY SINGH**

1. The golden entrance arch to Harimandir,
depicts our father Guru. Of his household,
Bhai Bala and Mardana first sat near.

They help sing out the Word. It's multi-fold
as the Milky Way at night. From star to star
each one relays the Light.

No human mould can be an avatar, yet gates lead
somewhere. I hear my Guru sing above in gold
before the unseen feet of Ek Oankar.

2. The Truth stays longer than a fighter jet
skywriting messages in smoke
above a golden shrine. The Truth won't let
impressions of black boots and bullets take
away the peace. Truth breathes slow pace
and cool spreads calm, unruffled as a lake.

No one religion, caste or master race
can topple Truth, or That behind the likeness.
Thus, Harimandir never loses face.

3. The Guru's utterance is the golden arch,
a sound-wave form erected for ourkind.
A plodding pilgrim can straight forward march
on through. Nam simran's peace of mind
brings you inside the virtual masonry.
You are the Harimandir, gold-designed
in 3D space. Here 'I' walks on to 'Thee',
point A is B. 'I' stepson through the gate.
Sat Nam, Sat Nam, please let this mind walk free.

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"International Punjabi Conference" held successfully in Delhi

While speaking at the two days International Punjabi Conference, held at Guru Tegh Bahadur Khalsa College (Delhi University) - Former Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh, chief guest at the Conference, said a language was not only used for exchanging ideas, interaction and exercising religious practices, but also to uplift sincere thoughts and ideas.



He said, that "Punjabi, 1,000 years' old language has also the quality of uplifting thoughts, including revolutionary opinions and ideas.

While inaugurating the International Punjabi Conference that was attended by writers, academicians and various other dignitaries, including NRIs, Sardar Manmohan Singh said the language teachers and students would get benefited by the conference.

"Baba Farid and Guru Nanak Devji enriched the Punjabi language by using their couplets and religious verses as enshirned in Sri Guru Granth Sahib. This language played important role in revolution for the independence of the country, "he said.

Speaking in chaste Punjabi, Dr Singh said, "A language is a medium of expression used by everybody, groups and even children to express their ideas. Symposiums, workshop and debates are held in languages."

Without naming any film or painting Dr Manmohan Singh said some particular community felt that certain films, writings and paintings tarnish the image of the community and religion. The community people used the medium of language to get imposed a ban on such films, writings and paintings.

He said sometimes even the government also felt that writings of particular language tarnished its image. However, the good thoughts could never be suppressed. They rose on their own and there was no need to ban a bad thought, they subside with the passage of time, he said. "

"In 1469, new revolutionary proverbs in Punjabi language begun when Guru

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Nanak Devji laid the foundation of Sikh religion. In his sayings the Guru had indicated the ending of social evils. Punjabi is not only a language, but also has a scientific values," Sardar Manmohan Singh said.

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★★★★★★

Brazilian Sikhs visit 'Darbar Sahib' plead for 'Gender Equality'

A delegation of the Sikh Dharma International from Brazil recently visited Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple) Sri Amritsar. This marks the culmination of their India visit. The delegation includes women as well and they have been actively participating in religious programmes and teaching.

The Brazilian Sikh women, who hold command of the organisation prefix the term 'Jathedar' before their names and are also nominated to the 'Panj Pyaras' to conduct 'amrit sanchar', said Shanti Kaur Khalsa of the Sikh Dharma International and Dr Gurusangat Kaur Khalsa, head and founder of the Brazilian Association of Friends of Kundalini Yoga (ABAKY) in Belo Horizonte, Brazil.

Shanti Kaur Khalsa, who received Amrit Sanchar in the 70s during the then five high priests' visit to America, said there is no gender discrimination in the Sikh religion. "Sikh women in Brazil can perform kirtan, path or anything related to rituals without any restriction, unlike in India. I think, time may bring change here too when there will be no constraint for women to perform such sewa at Darbar Sahib. We met Akal Takht Jathedar Giani Gurbachan Singh too and apprised him of our view. We also observe the same sanctity and tenets for performing rituals and serving langar," she said.



Dr Gurusangat Kaur Khalsa said, "We have a community of more than 300 Sikhs in Brazil, out of which around ten are 'amritdharis' whereas the rest are 'sehajdhari' Sikhs. Though these 'sehajdhari' Sikhs are not baptised, they live Sikh lifestyle and dress in full bana which is very inspiring. We propagate yoga to keep the body fit and divert the youth's attention from falling victim to drug abuse or other vices," she said.

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While sharing her experience in Amritsar, she said, "Seeing the Golden Temple for the first time is a profound and life changing experience for many people. What you see in pictures does not come close to the beauty and majesty of experiencing the Sri Harmandir Sahib."

On the occasion, Pritpal Kaur Khalsa, CEO of 3HO International, said, "Sikh Dharma International's endeavor is to promote the teaching of our Gurus to everyone through visits to holy places in India. Our organisation has earlier undertaken Yatras from UK, US and now from Brazil."

The Sikh community has prospered all over the globe. This includes Brazil, the largest country in South America, which is a home of a substantial Sikh sangat. These people were inspired to Sikhism through the teachings of Siri Singh Sahib Bhai Sahib Harbhajan Singh Khalsa Yogi, popularly known as Yogi Bhajan.

[Courtesy: www.entrancecorner.com]

★★★★★★



Memorial to commemorate the battle of "Chappar Chiri"

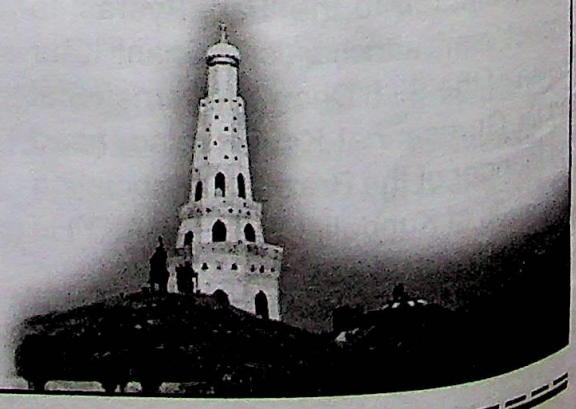
Tourism and Cultural Affairs Minister Navjot Singh Sidhu has recently announced Rs 24 Lakh for the development of Baba Banda Singh Bahadur memorial at Chappar Chiri, Punjab.

Sidhu said the fund would be used for the development of the site as well as facilitation of tourists.

The memorial was set up in 2011 to acknowledge the velour of the Sikhs in a historic battle with the Mughals.

Sidhu's visit to the memorial came after the MLA from Mohali, Balbir Singh Sidhu demanded sprucing up of the basic infrastructure of the memorial, an official release said.

Courtesy: India Post



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I, Narinder Pal Singh, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to my best knowledge and belief.

S/d Narinder Pal Singh
Signature of Publisher

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BOOK REVIEW
For review in
The Sikh Review
writers/publishers need to send two copies

Title of Book: Life of a Gurmukh: Sant Teja Singh
Author : Khem Singh Gill
Publication Year : 2016
No. of Pages/Cost : 767/ Rs. 500; 16.95 US$ (Hard Bound)
Published by : KHALSA DIWAN SOCIETY, New Westminster, BC, Canada

Reviewed by : Prof. Hardev Singh Virk*

Khalsa Diwan Society was established in 1906 in Vancouver through the efforts of the visionary Saint Scholar, Sant Teja Singh. The author, Dr. Khem Singh Gill, has made a tremendous effort to prepare this volume running into 59 Chapters covering the whole spectrum of life and services rendered by Sant Teja Singh to Sikh community globally. In the preface, author writes: "I had the privilege of kinship with Sant Teja Singh Ji since 1949 when I was a student of B.Sc. (Agriculture) at Khalsa College, Amritsar. I, therefore, have taken up the task of writing a biography in English of this highly educated, great Sikh scholar and Perfect Gur Sikh, Sant Teja Singh Ji."In my view, this kinship makes the author highly qualified to write this volume. In other words, a *Gurmukh* is writing about another *Gurmukh*. It is an uphill task to review this Volume of 767 pages; hence I took liberty to read salient features of this volume to make short shrift of my review.

Chapter 1 "Towards God consciousness" is rather too long for an introduction. The author has tried to elaborate *Sikhi* concepts introduced in Sri Guru Granth Sahib (SGGS) by profusely quoting references from SGGS. In my view, author

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wanted to establish his thesis: Who is a Gurmukh? to justify the title of this volume. He has succeeded in his mission by juxtaposing the qualities of *Gurmukh* vis a vis *Manmukh*. Meditation on divine name and methods of meditation are elaborated (pp. 96-106), and *Waheguru Gurmantra* is recommended by the author on basis of Gurbani. A critical examination of SGGS reveals that *Waheguru Gurmantra* is not recommended explicitly by any Guru author of Gurbani but by the scribe of SGGS, Bhai Gurdas, the great Sikh savant. The Bhat authors of Bani in SGGS use it explicitly but as a eulogy in praise of Guru RamdasJee, not for God.

Sant Teja Singh was born on March 17, 1877 at village Bolowali, not far from my village Kamoke, district Gujranwala. Teja Singh was betrothed to Bishan Kaur while he was still an innocent looking middle school student. His father was a Doctor who could support his education even up to the University level. But his step mother proved to be a sore in his married life. Teja Singh passed his M.A. and LL.B. examinations in 1901 from Punjab University, Lahore. He had a brief stint as a practicing lawyer in Gujranwala; then served as Headmaster of a High School in Bhehra, before joining as an officer in North Indian Salt Department at Samber Lake, in present day Rajasthan. In 1904, Teja Singh moved to Khalsa College, Amritsar to enter his chosen vocation of teaching. Khalsa College proved to be a turning point in the life of Teja Singh, as the magnetic power of Gurbani changed him from a materialist (atheist)to a seeker of spirituality. Thus Teja Singh underwent a profound spiritual experience during his service in Khalsa College. The author has described the ecstatic state of Teja Singh's mind overflowing with divine love. He was yearning to meet a divine person and ultimately succeeded in finding the most revered saint of India, Sant Attar Singh Ji of Mastuana.

The spiritual journey of Teja Singh started after he took Amrit from P*anj Pyaras* arranged by Sant Attar Singh Ji; he was reborn in the Khalsa fold and his name was changed from Niranjan Singh Mehta to Teja Singh under the command of *Panj Pyaras*. Teja Singh was a completely transformed personality, his association with saints like Baba Kesar Singh was motivating, who prophesied that Teja Singh will be blessed to visit England to spread Guru Nanak's message of *Naam* in the West. This prophesy came to be true when Teja Singh was mandated to visit England and America for higher studies and spreading the message of Sikh Gurus in those lands.

Education and Community Service: Teja Singh sailed for England on 6th August 1906 and joined University College London to obtain D.Sc. degree. After 2 months, he moved to Cambridge university and

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became the first turbaned Sikh on its campus. Mr Jackson, his tutor in the famous Downing College, allowed him the choice to keep his turban intact, against the rules of University, where black gown and cap were part of the dress code for both students and faculty. Teja Singh joined the degree for Science Tripos, started living in a rented accommodation with his family and performed the *Parkash* of Sri Guru Granth Sahib at his residence. He wanted to set up a Gurdwara in England and for this purpose he established Khalsa Jatha of the British Isles, London in 1908. The first Gurdwara in UK (and Europe) was started by Teja Singh in Shepherds Bush, West London. Teja Singh completed 5 terms out of 6; hence he fell short of the requirement to obtain Tripos degree at Cambridge. Leaving it midway, hemoved on to USA to study for a PG degree at Teachers College, Columbia University, New York on July 5, 1908. He had a chequered career as a student and failed to finish his education in both Cambridge and Columbia University. Ultimately, he was allowed to join the Harvard University, USA, from where he took the Master's degree in School education in 1911 before his return to India.

Why Teja Singh failed to perform well in education? The author has tried to justify his failure due to circumstances prevailing at that time. Before he left, he was promised some financial help by Sant Attar Singh Ji, which never came through during his stay in England. He was living from hand to mouth most of his time with his family. Once or twice, he was reduced to a pauper with just 5 centsleft on his person! But his faith in God and Guru helped him overcome such situations where survival looked remote. To pay high tuition fees, to support a family of 4 in a foreign country and to help his community in troubled waters was a herculean task which no one else except Teja Singh could do with grit and faith in God.

Sant Teja Singh was a good orator. He was invited to deliver lectures at Columbia University. His lectures created awareness about India and some Whites started learning *Gurmat* for their spiritual upliftment. His fame reached Canada and he was invited by Sikh Sangat of Vancouver for *Gurmat Parchar*. Teja Singh reached Vancouver on October 2, 1908 and participated in the activities of newly constructed Gurdwara. He visited Sikh community in Lower Midland and Port Moody during his one week's stay. He had to discontinue his studies at Columbia University for helping the Indian immigrants in getting PR (permanent residency) rights in Canada. Due to his social service for Indian community, he became an eye-sore in the imperial British circles; hence he was denied admission in Cambridge and Columbia University to complete his education.

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Teja Singh was destined to play a sterling role in Canada to protect the rights of Indians. The Canadian Govt. had planned to settle all Indians in British Honduras and a committee was constituted to make plans for exporting Indians. Teja Singh had to fight on behalf of Indians a legal battle and delivered public awareness lectures to counteract the propaganda of Canadian government against Asians, particularly the Sikh immigrants of India. Attitudes of Whites in Canada were captured in a popular song:

For white man's land we fight,
To oriental grasp and greed
We shall surrender, no, never.
Our watchword be "God save the King",
White Canada for ever.

The Indians were not allowed to bring their families to Canada. To overcome this hurdle, the Sangat of Vancouversent a telegram to Teja Singh on July 17, 1911. He convened a meeting of prominent Sikhs of Vancouver and a resolution was passed to send a deputation to Ottawa. This deputation consisted of 4 members: Teja Singh as its Leader, Dr Sundar Singh, Raja Singh and LW Hall, a missionary, as its members. This delegation met the concerned Ministers of Canadian Govt. and pleaded for removal of restrictions imposed on Indian immigrants to bring their families to Canada as British-Indian subjects. Teja Singh delivered public lectures in Ottawa to highlight this problem faced by Indians.

To help Mr. Crawford of New York, a devotee of Guru Nanak, to tide over his business crisis, Teja Singh registered a mining company "Guru Nanak Mining & Trust Company Limited" after purchasing 25% shares of Jacksonville gold mining company of California. He wanted to establish that Sikh immigrants are not poor and a burden on Canadian society, rather they can create jobs and bring business to Canada. Teja Singh was so successful in his exhortations in favour of Indians that he was considered a Mahatma and recognized as uncrowned King of the East Indians in British Columbia. He was instrumental in registering Khalsa Diwan Society, Vancouver on March 13, 1909 under the Society Act of BC, Canada. This Society is still active in Vancouver for promotion of Sikhism in Canada. It was a morale booster not only for the Sikhs but also for other Indian groups. Professor Teja Singh acted as the Head Priest and selected Panj Pyaras for *Amrit Sanchar* in British Columbia. This group was invited to UK for the same purpose and it left Vancouver to propagate Sikh religion.

However, as the divine message in Gurbani ordains: "Adversity is a medicine whereas prosperity leads to maladies; for, where there is pleasure, there is no desire for God (*dukh daaroo sukh rog bha-i-aa jaa sukh taam na ho-ee*)". The English poet,

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Oliver Goldsmith, also exhorts in a similar vein in his poem "Deserted Village":

Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,

Where wealth accumulates, and men decay.

When the Sikhs started bathing in the prosperity, there was a split and the opponents of Teja Singh wanted to implicate him in a case of embezzlement of company funds. He was called back from London and when the audit was done the charge of bungling proved to be false. The shares of gold mine were surrendered to Mr Crawford and the dream of Teja Singh to establish a Sikh University in Vancouver remained a far cry.

Teja Singh presented his paper "The Sikh Movement in India and its relation to Free Christianity" to highlight the contributions of Sikh Gurus in a Berlin Congress of Free Christianity held on 5-11 August, 1910. After completing his Masters degree in Harvard, he moved to California on the invitation of Baba Jawala Singh and Baba Wasakha Singh (Gadari Babas) of Holtville Farm and first Sikh Gurdwara in USA was founded in Sept. 1911 at Stockton. The Pacific Coast Khalsa Diwan Society, Stockton was registered on 27 May, 1912 to avoid any legal troubles. Teja Singh was elected as its first President. I happened to visit Sikh Museum at Stockton and found that Sikh Sangat (congregation) was allowed to sit on chairs as in a Church, while Guru Granth Sahib was installed on a podium. Before his return to India, a new Gurdwara was establishedin Victoria, BC, Canada on 6 October, 1912.

Teja Singh boarded the ship Mont-eagle at Vancouver towards theend of March 1913 and journeyed back to India via Japan, China, Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaya. He faced lot of hardships, for example, he boarded the ship from Kobe (Japan) without tickets for his family, but his faith in Guru was unshakable. Before he disembarkedat Shanghai, a procession of 35,000 Sikhs was waiting for his reception at the port and they paid for his journey. He was overwhelmed by the welcome received from the *Sikh Sangats* of China, Hong Kong and elsewhere, who offered him gifts and paid for his journey onwards to India. Teja Singh delivered lectures, organised *Keertan* samagams and held *Amrit Sanchar* programs in Gurdwaras. It shows Sikhi was flourishing in South-East Asia before his arrival and he became an instrument to further boost it. He returned to the holy presence of Sant Attar Singh Ji at Mastuana Sahib after almost 7 years to receive his blessings.

Sant Teja Singh as an Institution Builder and Preacher: Teja Singh was subjected to rigorous spiritual training by Sant Attar Singh Ji. His daily routine started at 2 AM in the ambrosial hour (Amrit vela), joining religious services till sun rise and then doing manual work (Seva) as ordained by the Master. After 3 years (1913-16) of training and passing rigorous tests, he was allowed to serve the Society in the field of

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education. His first assignment was as Principal, Khalsa Girls High School, Bhasaur set up by BabuTeja Singh, a Sikh reformer. He resigned from Bhasaur and joined Khalsa High School, Kallar (Dera Khalsa). On the bidding of his Master (Sant Attar Singh), he joined as Founder Principal of Guru Nanak Khalsa College, Gujranwala (1917); laid the foundation stone of Akal College at Mastuana (1918), and then joined as Principal, Teachers Training College, Banaras Hindu University (BHU) (1919), the premier institution of India. It may be of interest to readers of the Sikh Review that foundation stone of BHU was laid by Sant Attar Singh Ji on 24 December, 1914. After a year of stay in BHU, Teja Singh was called back to Mastuanain 1920 by his Master to run the Akal College. He arranged donations for the college building in Calcutta and mortgaged his own house in Gujranwala to raise funds. Such was his devotion and dedication for the cause of rural education in Punjab.He served as Principal, Akal College for 3 years and when group jealousy raised its head, Teja Singh went back to Guru Nanak Khalsa College Gujranwala as its Principal (1923). He resigned in 1926 to join his Master on a spiritual mission for life.

Sant Teja Singh remained attached to Sant Attar Singh Ji as a devoted comrade on his missionary tours in Kashmir and Punjab. He was engaged in the spiritual uplift of Sikhs and other communities in Punjab as advised by his Master. When the Master left his mortal frame, Teja Singh raised Gurdwaras at Cheema (Sangrur) and Tapiana Sahib, Kanoha (now Pakistan) in his memory. SantTeja Singh undertook extensive missionary travels to East Africa, Burma, Thailand, Singapore, Malaya, Japan, USA and Canada to preach and promote the mission of Sikh Gurus. Finally, Sant Teja Singh moved to the scenic valley of Himalayas and built the first mud Gurdwara at Baru Sahib (Solan, HP) in 1960. It has now grown as the hub of Akal Academies throughout India under the Kalgidhar Trust registered in 1982 at Simla. The ideal of Sant Teja Singh and his Master to provide value-based education has been put into practice at Baru Sahib by Baba Iqbal Singh, the patron of Akal Academies, and the author of this book, Dr Khem Singh Gill.

It may be pointed out that I have to leave many episodes untouched in the life of Sant Teja Singh and his Master (Sant Attar Singh Ji). For example, Sant Teja Singh was a Gurmukh saint-scholar par excellence but was not a social recluse, like our traditional Indian Rishi-munis. He was fully conscious of his responsibilities towards his community. He was involved in Gurdwara Reform Movement during 1920s. He was so much respected in Sikh community that he was chosen as first interim Jathedar of Akal Takhat, a fact unknown to many Sikh historians. But it was not of his ilk to join Sikh politics of Gurdwaras.

I congratulate the author for his labour of love. It must have taken years of

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strenuous research to dig up scattered archival materials. Despite all efforts by the author, some minor mistakes and howlers may be pointed out as follows: some Gurbani quotes have a mismatch with the text (page 37); corrections in Gurbani quotes required in footnotes (pages 71 & 85); tell-tale information about Baba Banda Singh's martyrdom is not trust-worthy (page 223), information about second Sikh wa happening in 1819 is wrong (page 268) Boon (Bonn?) universityin Germany (pag 321), and some 77minor typos which nee to be corrected.

Adabnama : Khalsa College Amritsar
By : Dr. Jasbir Singh Sarna;
Foreword by Prof Harchand Singh Bedi, Jammu
Publication Year : 2107, 258p. ISBN: 878-81-86741-34-4(Pbk)
Published by : Sant & Singh

132236

Renewed by M P Satija*

Founded 125 years ago in 1892, the Khalsa College, Amritsar is more than an educational institute for the Sikhs. It is a monument to the Sikh ideology, history and a flagship of Sikhism. It has produced many Sikh leaders in all walks of life from army to education, sports to politics and literature to Agriculture. It is a nursery of Sikh leadership and ideology.

This wok is a biographical directory of about 200 eminent ex- students who have earned a name in different fields. (Dr Sarna is one of them, p.223). This includes such luminaries as Dr Manmohan Singh,ex-PM, Bhai Veer Singh, Mulkraj Anand and Partap Singh Kairon, to name a few.

Each entry starts on a new page whc length varies from a paragraph to two pag depending on the information available. most cases a photograph of the person also given as inset in the insignia of t College. Each entry provides informati about the parentage, work a achievements of the person included. T arrangement is chronological by the y of birth of the person. The first pers included was born in 1810 and the last o in 1980.

There is no index which otherwise wo have enhanced the reference value of unique work. This work is a contribution the history of the Khalsa College and Sikh community

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